THE BEDROCK OF BELIEF

By WM. F. ROBISON, S.J.

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THE BEDROCK OF BELIEF

The Foundations of Religion

BY

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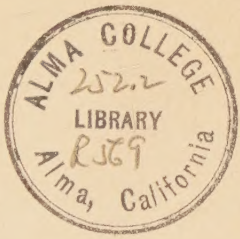
Second Edition



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TO
MY COUNTRY'S PATRONESS
MARY IMMACULATE

FOREWORD

The present work concludes the line of thought set forth in the two companion volumes, *Christ's Masterpiece* and *"His Only Son."* Combined, the three courses of lectures, which are given to the public in the form in which they were delivered as Lenten Lectures in St. Francis Xavier (College) Church, form a compendious exposition of Christian apologetics.

It is a remarkable fact that many of the religious errors of today, as well as of the past, are due in great part to false philosophical principles. This fact emphasizes the importance of the considerations herewith presented, wherein the rational grounds of religion are established. True religion presupposes sound philosophy: revealed religion is built on the foundation of natural religion: the necessity of Catholicity, as Christianity in the concrete, rests on the necessity of religion in general.

Here, as elsewhere, grace neither destroys nor neglects nature, but completes and perfects it.

It is hoped that the reflections set forth in these discourses will be of use as an antidote to the poison of irreligion, which is often masked under the guise of pretentious erudition and deceives the unwary or the self-conceited by the glamor of a false science.

Recognized theological and philosophical treatises have afforded the basis of thought for these lectures. Besides, recourse has been had to special articles in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* and the *Dictionnaire Apologétique* and such like sources. To all of these acknowledgment is made. Solidity with truth, rather than originality as to matter or method of presentation has been the aim of the author. After all, it is "the truth which shall make men free." [1]

WILLIAM F. ROBISON, S.J.

St. Louis University,
Nativity of the Blessed Virgin,
September 8th, 1918.

[1] John VIII, 32.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD v

LECTURE I

THE FUNDAMENTAL FACT PAGE

Nature and division of apologetics reviewed. Necessity of religion in general the subject matter of this course. Importance of inquiry. What is religion? False definitions. Correct notion as derived from fundamental fact: free dependence of man on God. Universality of fact of religion among all nations. False systems of explanation: animism; magic; worship of stars; social instinct. False theories cannot explain fact. Theism does explain: hence worthy of consideration even before objective truth is proved. Benefits of religion to mankind: civilization and culture; high ideals; respect for authority; patriotism. Effects of decline of religion in past; at present. Religion cannot fail. . . 1

LECTURE II

ALPHA AND OMEGA

Truth of theism with its consequences to be established. Consent of mankind first proof of God's existence. Can God be known? Two kinds of knowledge of God. Atheists:

PAGE

practical. Doctrinal. Position of agnostics towards Kant modernists. Philosophy of common sense stands. Can know very much about God: can prove His existence. Traditional proofs from contingent and caused to necessary and self-existent. Personality shown a priori a posteriori. From order. Internal finality. Its denial contrary to good sense, to sound science, to sane philosophy. Reduction to self-evident principles. God the source of all worth. His sublimity. 38

LECTURE III

THE LOSS OF THE SENSE

Development of true notion of God. Life and liberty not incompatible with changelessness. Omnipotent, prescient, just and merciful, infinitely happy. False views. Monstrous contradictory. Pantheistic realistic ideal-istic. Appeal to spoken mind. Kant's destruction of idea of God. Anti-Kant of religion. Other variations of pantheism. Problem of evil in world. Moral evil presupposes God. Physical evil under God's providence tends to higher good. Value of pain. Christian Science and New Thought subversive of Christianity, essentially pantheistic. 71

LECTURE IV

"A LITTLE LESS THAN THE ANGELS"

Freedom of creation ask End of creation. Without intelligent creatures world as next

PAGE

uble enigma. Man's nature and dignity the other term of relation of religion. Man's soul simple and spiritual. Constant change in man with subsisting identity. Thought proves spirituality: grasps immaterial realities; abstract knowledge of material things; calculated progress. Man may glory in dignity. Free will. Opponents. Root of freedom: extent. Ethical argument. Psychological proof. More thoroughly realized by careful scrutiny. Justification of Christian asceticism. Objections: closed system: conservation of energy 105

LECTURE V

THE BOND BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH

Proper for man to profess religion. Must he do it? Meaning of moral law. It exists. False theories. Kant: divorce of religion from morality. Moral Evolution. Its supreme canon specified in its "pentalogue." Five gratuitous assumptions. Consequences of system. The truth. Outline. Direction to end: irrational beings: reasonable creatures. God's manifested will the reason of obligation. To break this moral bond is to bind self in chains of slavery 140

LECTURE VI

THE SANCTION UNTO EVERLASTING

Summary of foregoing. Sanction necessary for effective law. Universality of notion of sanction. Some sanction in this life. Not suf-

PAGE

ficient. Hence complete in future life. Man's soul immortal. Spurious proofs of spiritualists. Desire of perfect happiness. No "conditioned immortality." Heaven and hell sanction as to good and evil. Both eternal. No difficulty as to first. Reason defends teaching of revelation as to eternal retribution. Sufficient sanction: probation fixed with life. Objections: God's justice: His goodness. "De profundis" "Sursum corda" 173

THE BEDROCK OF BELIEF

LECTURE I

THE FUNDAMENTAL FACT

Nature and division of apologetics reviewed. Necessity of religion in general the subject matter of this course. Importance of inquiry. What is religion? False definitions. Correct notion as derived from fundamental fact: free dependence of man on God. Universality of fact of religion among all nations. False systems of explanation: animism; magic; worship of stars; social instinct. False theories cannot explain fact. Theism does explain: hence worthy of consideration, even before objective truth is proved. Benefits of religion to mankind: civilization and culture; high ideals; respect for authority; patriotism. Effects of decline of religion in past; at present. Religion cannot fail.

It is of untold advantage in warfare to know the tactics of the enemy and the objective towards which his attacks are chiefly

directed; for the defense is then surer and more effective than it would be in ignorance of the methods or the purpose of the foe. This is a fact trumpeted throughout the whole of the battle-scarred world: the same fact is true in the conflict waged for the safeguard of what is dearer to us than life itself, the blessed faith for which the loved Christ died. Different in different ages have been the onslaughts on truth by its ruthless enemies; manifold, the diverse onsets of "the gates of hell" against the Church the Master builded: but in these later years the hostile aggression has been against the very groundwork of faith through assaults upon the foundations of revealed religion.

Now, where the attack rages, there must our defense be turned; we must even carry the war into the enemy's country. Fight the foe we must with the might of the spirit and the arms of truth, but with the fulness of love warming our hearts for the erring ones who are wretched in their ignorance. This defense and this enlightening charity are the reasons for what is called "apolo-

getics." Some parts of apologetics have been the object of former considerations: another portion of the same will form the subject matter of the present course of lectures.

It is a repetition of an old and well known truth, but it is useful for the clear understanding of the work before us, to remark that there are three main divisions in this study of apologetics. There are three great questions to be asked and answered: first, Why must one be a Catholic? second, Why must one be a Christian? third, Why must a man profess any religion at all?

The first question, then, is, Why must I be a Catholic? Our investigation of this question formed the subject of a previous course of lectures.[1] We then studied the matter, not as doubting our position, not as calling in question whether the assent of our faith had been well given, but to see more clearly how reasonable that assent was and is, and besides, to clear the way for honest inquirers that they too might come to the goal of truth. Now, the answer to the ques-

[1] Cf. *Christ's Masterpiece.*

tion was this, that starting from the assumption of the exclusive truth of Christianity and standing on the immovable foundation that Jesus Christ is the authorized legate of the Most High and the very Son of the Eternal God, true God as well as true man, whose revelation must be accepted and whose means of salvation must be made use of in order to come to the heavenly home prepared for His loved ones, we reached the conclusion, that, among all that call themselves Christ's Church, the Catholic Church alone bears stamped upon her being the seals which differentiate Christ's masterpiece from counterfeit imitations; that nowhere but in the Catholic Church is there pure and unadulterated Christianity; that Catholicity alone is Christ's religion in its concrete reality.

Note that in this inquiry we started with the assumption that Jesus Christ is divine and that therefore His religion of Christianity is exclusively true. That assumption we had to make good. We had to answer the question, Why must one be a Christian? We did answer it in another series of lec-

tures.[1] The answer was this: we must be Christians because Christianity is the religion revealed by Jesus Christ the Son of God. His divinity is the foundation of the necessity of His religion, and that divinity of His we proved.

We proved it from the testimony of the Church, considered as a great fact in the world, with her witness shown to be divine by the moral miracle of her existence and propagation, quite apart from the record of her institution: and her testimony, thus ratified from heaven, proclaims the Godhead of Him whom she venerates as her Founder and adores as her God. Furthermore, the authentic records of the gospel history show that Christ most certainly claimed to be divine: and that claim is worthy of credence because of the character of Him who made it; that claim is signed with the seal of prophecy and of the Father's testimony through miracles, and especially through Christ's resurrection from the dead. And so, before the human lovableness of Christ's humanity, before the

[1] Cf. "*His Only Son.*"

overwhelming grandeur of Christ's divinity the soul must be bowed down to be lifted up, must humble itself to be exalted. And thus the second question was answered.

But this second question with its answer supposes a prior question with its answer. In digging down to the foundations of our faith we must dig deeper still, until we come to "The Bedrock of Belief,"—and this is the task before us at this stage of our apologetic considerations. This is at the base of all else. If it is once settled that one is bound to profess religion in some form, it is quite patent that he must accept and practise that religion which God Himself has deigned to reveal and has dignified with His sanction. But must a man profess any religion at all? and if so, why?

As I remarked before, when treating of the reality of Christianity's claim to our adherence, "to the man who denies or doubts the existence of a personal God, beneficent and provident; to the man who flouts the notion of free will and the obligation of a fixed moral law; to the man who can see no farther than the limits of this life, and who

says that when a man dies he dies like a dog and perishes utterly; to the man who laughs at future reward or punishment for the deeds done in the days of the flesh,"[1] there is no practical utility in speaking of the claims of Christianity. With such a man one must begin further back. Such a one must be brought, if it be possible, to the calm and unbiased consideration of the truths which underlie the necessity of professing religion in general.

He must be shown that there is a God, who has a provident care over the work of His hands; he must be brought to admit the fact that man is the creature of this Creator and dependent upon his sovereign Lord; he must be made to recognize that man's spirit is immortal and free, but bound by the responsibility that lies upon him from the moral law, which holds his will with the force of the will of the Almighty; he must be led to bow down before the truth that this law has a sanction, which none but the omnipotent Creator could give to urge the faltering will of the free creature to observe the

[1] *"His Only Son,"* p. 6.

order which grows out of the essential relations of things and is backed up by God Himself. All these things are true, and they are the answer to the question, the most fundamental of all, Why must a man profess any religion? This question *is* the most fundamental of all; for beyond it we need not and cannot go in an investigation, which is strictly and specifically religious.

The supreme importance of this inquiry is evident from the fact, that nowadays so many men are infected with the virus of indifferentism, whether absolute or more moderate. In the end both forms come to practically the same thing; for the statement, made by so many, that "one religion is as good as another" can have any sense only in the case that there is no religion at all which is of any value or of any obligation. If religion is a necessity, it must be the religion which is pleasing to God; and, as has been established before, the only religion which is thus completely pleasing to God is Christ's sacred revelation, safeguarded by the Catholic Church.

We see, then, the immense importance of

the present inquiry. So, once again we ask, Must a man profess religion? And we answer, Yes. And why? Because God is man's Creator and demands this submission: He holds man to it by the undying law which binds man's free responsible will, and is backed up by the sanction that is unto everlasting. The development of these reasons will occupy our attention during the present course of lectures.

Let us reflect and let us pray. Prayer may well accompany our efforts,—prayer for ourselves and for those who are wandering in the gleamless night of ignorance, whether culpable or inculpable. God grant that our reflections and our prayers may bring us to a deeper realization of the unshakable soundness of the grounds of our faith, and lead to the brightness and warmth of the light of truth those who are so wretched as not to see! From the necessity of religion in general the path leads direct to the blessedness of Christianity: from the sacredness of Christ's revelation the way leads on safe and sure to Christ's one true Catholic Church: from the Catholic Church

the road stretches onward, straight and narrow, but unswerving, for those who are truly of the Church as well as in it, to the heavenly home where the dear Master is waiting to bestow on His loved ones the warmest welcome in the gift of His Sacred Heart.

However, before taking up the fundamental reasons of religion with the proofs of their validity, all leading to the truth that a man must profess religion in order to be a man worthy of himself and of his destiny, and in order to fulfill his obligations to God, we must have a sufficiently clear notion of what religion is. For this reason we shall now examine "a fundamental fact," and shall clear the ground for the building of the edifice of truth.

It would indeed be to build upon sand, if we were to put forth the reasons for the necessity of man's professing religion, unless we had some fairly accurate notion about what religion really is. Without dwelling upon the verbal definition, which in all its forms has the germ-idea of some relation to God, the multitude and variety of false or incomplete definitions is truly

striking. Religion has been called superstition, lamentable error, childish fear, a collection of scruples based upon illusion, a destruction of the free exercise of man's prerogatives:[1] it has been described as "a determination of man's absolute dependence,"[2] or as "morality touched by emotion."[3] Now, the falseness or incompleteness of these definitions is due in large measure to preconceived notions entertained about the origin and the history of religion and to the arbitrary assumptions of rationalists and materialistic evolutionists. Let us proceed in a saner manner than they have done: let us build upon a *fundamental fact,* constant, subject to verification, incontestable and universal, and broad and stable enough to give solidity to what is based upon it.

Now, the fact is[4] that whatever has been classed as religion among the peoples of the world always includes these three elements: first, the recognition of a power (or powers)

[1] Spencer, Reinach, etc.
[2] Schopenhauer.
[3] Matthew Arnold.
[4] Cf. Morris Jastrow, Jr., *The Study of Religion,* p. 170 ff.

not dependent upon man; secondly, the realization of man's dependence upon this power; and lastly, an attempt to enter into a relation with the same. Hence, as may be gathered from this fact, religion is the belief in a power above and beyond man, with regard to which man considers himself dependent; and this conviction goes forth to specific acts of prayer and sacrifice, and grows into the ruling of man's life with the purpose of establishing favorable communication between himself and the power in question. In a word, at all times and in all places we find a body of doctrinal beliefs, largely traditional, which are obligatory; we find a code of rules, imposed upon human activities in the name of a superhuman power; we find a system of rites and practices, destined to establish and regulate man's individual and social relations with this power.

And all this grows into homage and worship of One greater than man and conceived as supreme, under whatever name, whether Father, End, Lord, the Strong One, God. Men have erred as to the object of their

homage; they have split up the Supreme One into thousands of deities; they have made gods of stocks and stones: but always and everywhere they have offered worship to the Being or beings whom they conceived as supreme, and whether through fear or love have shown dependent submission.

All this comes back to what St. Thomas said long ago. He defined religion, on its subjective side, as the virtue inclining man practically and freely to acknowledge his dependence upon God's supreme sovereignty, whether by reverently worshiping and serving or by devoutly striving to adhere to God as the principle of his creation and the end necessary for his happiness; and, on its objective side, as the sum of those duties which flow forth from this dependence and regulate man's individual and social efforts to union with God.[1]

Of course, it is not contended that all men have had this correct and noble idea of religion. The attitude of many of them who did not mount so high I have already referred to. Their errors I have acknowl-

[1] *Summa Theol.*, IIa, IIae, q. 81–86.

edged. But the error of mistaking many nature-deities for the one true God, whilst it vitiates religion to a greater or less degree, does not entirely destroy it. There only does religion cease utterly, where the Supreme One is represented as devoid of all personality or consciousness. Pantheism's concept of God, as we shall see more fully in a later lecture, is the death of religion. A pantheistic deity is no more capable of awaking the sentiment of religion in man's heart and of turning man to the effort of homage or propitiation, than "the all-pervading ether or the force of gravitation."[1]

Religion, then, as is seen from this fundamental fact, is the free dependence of man upon God,—a dependence which goes beyond the bare practice of exterior works, and is based upon objective and solidly established truths. Religion is principally a matter of mind and will; but it is not that alone. It embraces the whole of man's being; and that being is not pure spirituality. The imagination is stirred by the recognition of the unseen world; the emotions are

[1] *Cath. Encyc.* s. v. "Religion," p. 739.

aroused into exercise; hope flows forth into the desire of attainable happiness; the realization of duty performed is as balm to the heart; the consciousness of friendship with the Supreme One thrills with joy. And thus, religion is the perfect goal not only of intelligence and will, but of sentiment and emotion as well.

Yet it is by no means a mere sentiment: it is not a blind adhesion to truths and practices: it is not an instinct which gropes unseeing after an object, unknown and perhaps unknowable,—as the agnostics and modernists would have it. It is the conscious recognition of God's supremacy and the free acting out in life of the consequences of this relationship.

Now, the same fact which shows us what religion is, is remarkable for its universality. In the dim ages of the past as far as history has been able to shed its light, in the brighter days of the present time, there is no people of note absolutely devoid of religion: men have always acknowledged and worshiped some Supreme Being (or beings), personal and living, whose will

founds moral obligation. This is the calm and impartial verdict of anthropologists; and even rationalists are forced to admit the *fact,* though they try to explain it or explain it away by myriad theories. Religion has been corrupted or obscured or vitiated among many peoples,—I had almost said, amongst all that had not God's revelation, though we need not dwell upon that; but it has persisted as an historical fact amongst all mankind, not sunken to a state of degradation bordering on brutal savagery or bestial degeneration.

Such degradation may, indeed, kill the sentiment of religion. It has brought forth practical irreligion with practical atheism in many, many instances. Nay, every time we ourselves turn away from the straight path of morality, seek our gratification in the byways of sin, or grovel in the depths of unmanning transgressions, we hurl heavenward an impotent cry of denial and we blast ourselves with the lying blasphemy that there is no God save our vile desires or the objects of our degrading infatuation. But down in our heart of hearts we know

that it is a lie and a blasphemy. Many too who hold the sceptre of sway over peoples (and we need not delve into the musty records of the past to prove it), like Lucifer in his pride have exalted themselves above the stars and made themselves like the Most High. They have labored, and do labor, at relegating a forgotten God to the limbo of worn-out superstitions. (Italy and France and Mexico in their governments have stood for that.) But when men or governments have been sobered after the dissipation of revolt, when they have torn away or have been stripped of the blinding bandages of unseeing folly, they have acknowledged and served and worshiped,—as they have gone down to their doom.

Their knowledge of God and of His dominion may have come not only from their own reasoning upon the world about them, but also, and possibly in the majority of cases, from the teachings of parents or elders, from authority made venerable by immemorial usage, from the observance of sacred rites and customs; but it is there, and they worship the Being (or beings) Su-

preme, as their first beginning and last end, as their Lord and Master.

These are not groundless assertions: they are vouched for by history, and are accredited by sincere and unbiased study. This is the verdict of those who have delved deepest into the records of the Indo-European races, the Semitic peoples, the Egyptians, the Chinese and Japanese. This is the unprejudiced judgment of those who have investigated the individual and national lives of the Australian aborigines, the Bantous and Hamites and Pygmies of Africa. These peoples have, one and all, a religious worship and a system of morality. In fact, irreligion with its basic atheism is not the product of primitive races: it is the offspring of a so-called culture, which is not based upon the humility of mind proper to true intellectual greatness. The common folk never doubt of the necessity of worship. They may go astray from the path of righteousness; but they do it with their eyes wide open. It is only the self-centred philosopher who is vanquished by the phantoms which he has raised by his subtle

difficulties and who wraps his mind in the folds of a self-imposed agnosticism.

I have said that the very notion of religion is twisted and perverted by many, whose preconceived ideas go so far as to falsify facts. The truth of this statement is made manifest by the briefest consideration of their attempted explanations of the origin of religion, by a glance at their imagined histories of the religious sentiment. Mind, there is question of the explanation of the *fact* of the universal religious attitude of mankind. But they go beyond and behind the fact, and imagine a prereligious period from which mankind emerged by the process of evolution.

E. B. Tylor with a great show of erudition traces everything back to a development of "animism," which he calls "a general belief in spiritual beings," according to which primitive peoples looked upon everything, even stocks and stones, as endowed with life. From the sight of death, from swoons, from the illusions of dreams they had come to some notion of a soul, and in their ignorance they attributed this soul-

idea to inanimate objects, until they came to associate mighty spirits with the great phenomena of nature and gave homage to them. Herbert Spencer concocted a variation of this theory by a reference to the ghosts of departed ancestors, the worship of whom was transferred to an imagined deity. J. G. Frazer has his theory about the evolution of religion from "magic," which he styles "a false science and an art miscarried," or from "totemism" with its erroneous interpretations of the laws of nature. Again, for many of the Pan-Babylonists (M. Mueller with them) the starting point is the "worship of the stars" with an unseeing groping after the infinite. The "social instinct" is the shibboleth of sociologists of Durkheim's stamp, and largely too of Reinach, Loisy and the like. In their efforts at explanation all of these men, whether consciously or unconsciously, are guided by their philosophical ideas and principles, and for practically all of them these ideas and principles are those of materialistic evolution.

Now, quite apart from the falsity of these

principles, which are the death-blow to truth and the destruction of sound morality, there is another defect in them; and this, in a scientific theory brought forward to explain a fact, is, or should be, the capital sin in the eyes of every dyed-in-the-wool scientist: and it is this,—these theories do not explain the fact.

The fact to be explained is the universal existence of religion, and, since religion is the free dependence of man upon God or on gods, of theism with theistic morality. Neither animism nor magic nor fetishism nor totemism nor myths nor superstition can adequately explain the recognition of a Supreme Being (or beings), whose power is over the spirit world, whose sway is above the might of magic, whose reverence is older than myths and superstitions. What is more, from religious history it is commonly found that the older forms of a religion are more free from the stain of superstition than the subsequent forms,—a thing quite inexplicable in the theory of evolution. It is found that the more of animism and magic and the like there is, the less of the

sublimity and purity of theism and its morality is to be met with, though it should be the other way about, if their theory were correct.

No, the theories cannot explain the transition from ideas which are non-theistic and unmoral, nay, irreligious and immoral, to theistic faith and the humble worship of the extramundane Being or beings. Much less can these theories explain how a large portion of mankind could rise from the idea of polytheism (which gratuitously enough they suppose to have been the initial stage of religious worship), to the knowledge of one only God and to the nobler morality that flows from this recognition.

Whilst these evolutionistic theories do not explain the religious fact, theism does explain it. Of course, this does not yet stamp with the seal of unqualified truth the belief in God and the worship which grows out of this belief. A theory or a doctrine may explain the fact which it undertakes to explain, without for that reason being true beyond the possibility of error. But, if it explains, it is at least worthy of considera-

tion. Now, the universal religious sentiment is adequately explained by this, that mankind has a confused knowledge of God (or gods), which arises almost spontaneously in the mind and urges men on to recognize their obligation of serving and worshiping, and freely to express their dependence upon the superhuman power.

The idea of God, of which I speak, is not the distinct philosophical concept which sees that God alone is all that subtle reason can prove about Him. It is the vulgar or common knowledge of Him, which indeed the mind can miss, but which it ordinarily grasps with a sureness that is like looking upon the light of the sun. Not by intuition does the mind grasp God; but it seems to find Him "by an act of knowledge so rapid that it looks almost like an intuition,"[1] and knows the obligation of acknowledging Him for what He is and of living in accordance with this recognition. This vague or confused and common knowledge of God is capable of deeper and truer development. So too, alas! in men with a twisted mentality

[1] L. de Grandmaison, *Recherches*, I, 197.

and much more in those of a perverted morality it can degenerate into the basest of superstitions and the foulest perversions of mind and heart.

That theism does explain the fundamental religious fact,—this does not, as I have already said, prove that theism is objectively true. It only shows that it is worthy of serious consideration. This is a greal deal in itself; and this is precisely what the self-constituted wise ones of a false science will not recognize. Yet it is not sufficient for us to stop with this recognition of the value of theism. We must see whether it is founded upon objective reality. Is religion necessary? and is its necessity demonstrable? Is there a God? and is He the Creator of man? Is man free? and is he subject to a moral law with sufficient sanction? Once more, the answer to all these questions is, Yes. The proofs of this assertion we shall consider in the remaining lectures of this course. But right now let us look at what religion has done for mankind, and let us see what this world would be without this free dependence of man upon God.

What, then, has religion done for mankind? It has been the strongest of all levers for the uplift of the race. True, in some of its more degraded forms religion has helped to keep the individual and national level low. When indulgence in the basest of base inclinations was sanctified under the cloak of religious observance; when vice was personified and deified in the gods, it was doubly difficult to strip away the mask of hypocrisy and by showing vice in all its naked hideous deformity to drive men away from its prurient vileness. But even in these sad circumstances the little good that remained was due in largest measure to the elements of religion which were not yet destroyed. And when mankind was blessed with the higher types of religious devotedness, we see religion's beneficent effects throughout the broad reaches of the world.

Only the blindest of the blind can fail to see what Christianity has done for mankind, where its sacred influence has been predominant. The truest culture in the history of the world has flowed forth from it as from a fountain undefiled. It has safe-

guarded the principles of the loftiest morality, and has grounded these principles on motives of the highest worth. It has been the parent of the civilization which is the boast and the hope of the world. It brought about the recognition of the individual man, as worthy of consideration for his personal dignity and not merely as a cog in the machinery of the State. It set its face against the enslavement of man by man and and blazed the trail which led to the abolition of slavery. It took the wild barbarians of the North, who were swept down upon southern Europe on a tidal wave of blood, and tamed their ferocity. It forced down into the depths of their savage consciousness respect for the principles of justice and honesty and truth and charity. Over and over again the work had to be done; for the beast was not tamed in a day: but little by little religion led the strong to respect the rights of the weak; it brought the mighty to protect the helpless, who before had been their legitimate prey. In a word, religion in the Christian Church laid the basis of Christian civilization and guarded the

frontiers against the incursions of the foes who would have laid it waste.

Yes, religion did this; and religion alone could have done it. Religion alone can keep alive in a people devotion to high ideals. Take away the relation of man to God (and that is the basis of the religious sentiment), and there is nothing left to keep man from sinking down into the depths. Public opinion alone will not do: nay, public opinion itself slips down to pagan defilement, when the soul ceases to look up to God. Religion alone can safeguard respect for authority; for only religion can forcibly hold man's gaze to the will of an Almighty Lord, who alone is strong enough to bind the free wilfulness of man to the way of duty, which is often hard and strewn with the thorns of sacrifice. Only religion can make the fire of patriotism glow with the fierceness that will burn up the chaff of selfishness and fuse the scattered fragments of individuality into a solid and compact mass, undivided and indivisible. Only religion can truly indicate and effectually make possible the fulfillment of man's duties re-

garding himself, his family, his neighbors, and his country. All this may sound like gross exaggeration; but it is the soberest truth.

For, as far as practical consequences go, without religion there is no God. True, whether God's blessed existence is acknowledged or not, He does exist in His own transcendent majesty. But, unless by religion man recognizes the truth of God's existence and shapes his life according to this tremendous fact, it is as though God did not exist; and without God there is no virtue, no morality, no obligation.

No virtue; for virtue is the ordering of life so as to come to God by the paths which lead from uprightness to salvation,—and without God there is no uprightness, there is no salvation. No morality; for morality is the shaping of one's activities according to the essential order of things,—and without God the foundation of this order is swept away. No obligation; for obligation is the imposition of a moral bond upon the will of man by the necessity placed between

his actions and his last end,—and none but the infinite God is strong enough to forge this chain, and none but God can be man's last end. With virtue gone, with morality a mockery, with obligation a farce what does man become? A higher beast, a law unto himself,—and that means the unfettered outlaw. What does the family become? A litter and a prison, a stranger to the sweetness of true love in its noblest forms of self-sacrificing devotedness. What is the result in the State? Either the tyrannical oppression of irresponsible absolutism or the anarchy of each for himself with his hand against all men. When religion is driven away, she takes with her truth and justice and honesty and charity, her children, and leaves behind her a desert waste and a howling wilderness.

To see more clearly the truth of these statements; to realize that they are not wild and incoherent and unfounded assertions, look at the world, past and present, where the influence of religion has waned, and from the dire consequences judge what un-

speakable horror would reign, should religion be altogether banished from the hearts of men.

First, look at the past. The heart is almost crushed with terror at the picture of the ancient world as it was sinking in the abyss of evil. The grossest superstition, the most unfeeling injustice, the most revolting immorality, the densest spiritual ignorance with regard to what is most vital for time and eternity,—this is what we see as we open the book of history and read the record.

Rome itself, which was practically the world at the advent of Christianity, presents a picture that is almost like a replica of hell. Slavery was the basis of the empire; fear, the bond of union. The oppressed sought some vile solace from their killing woes in the beastly grovelings of lust. The "great ones" fed themselves on unrestrained panderings to their own evil impulses, despised their slaves, used or abused their equals, courted the greater ones in trembling dread. They were lifted up in the empty folly of pride to be hurled down

to unspeakable and riotous degradation. The sweetness of childhood was a toy or a prey; the sacredness of unstained womanhood was defiled by wantonness, insulted as a plaything of passion, debased as a chattel. And in the midst of the fierce maelstrom of unchecked debauchery woman herself shrilled the demoniac laugh of recklessness, as she hugged her dishonor to her heart, or screamed aloud the shriek of despair amid the crash of a dying world. What wonder that the people's cries for bread rose to clamors for the contests of the arena? What wonder that the tiger-thirst, which always comes from lust, demanded the bloody games of the gladiators and the slaying of men "to make a Roman holiday"? Religion was dying,—and behold the chaos! If it were dead and gone, who would dare to face the dread prospect?

The darkness of this gruesome picture of the days gone by is reflected for the reenforcement of the same lesson of the need of religion from the lives of those men and women of our own times who are allowing the influence of religion on their souls to

wane. The wild boasts about "realizing oneself" and "living one's own life" are the exaggerations of an individualism which ignores God and His rights. They flow forth from the absurdity of a man-made system of morality, in which man is always master in theory and always slave in fact. Too often unreligious governments, which aim at making irreligious peoples, countenance such things as will bring down upon them the curse of an outraged Deity. Too often individuals, unmindful of their high destiny, are lapsing into an irreligiousness which to the thoughtful is ground for appalling apprehension.

Alas! it is all only too real. The mistaken notion of a false and wrong independence has led to the filthy orgies of "free love," advocated but too frequently by those very ones for whom it spells defilement,—by women. There is the pagan propaganda for shirking the most sacred obligations of marriage by race-suicide and the unhallowed devices for contraception. To such a pass have we come, that so-called reputable physicians can dare to pose as the

masters of human life and the arbiters of human destiny without being hounded from the habitations of decent men. Associations of professional men have the effrontery to urge upon the legislature of State or nation the legalizing of the infliction of death upon the incompetent or the diseased, and to cloak plain murder under the innocent sounding title of "euthanasia." Self-satisfied "scientists" and "philosophers," big with pride, can see nothing but the doctrine of the progress of mankind by the process of a blind evolution, grim as death and as pitiless, which shall culminate in the unmerciful irresponsibility and the ghastly ferocity of the "superman,"—a doctrine whose logical outcome for the nations is voiced in the heathenish motto that "might makes right."

These are terrible symptoms of a deep-seated disease, which, if unchecked, would lead to the destruction of social life; they are the fearful vanguard of an army of devastation, which would bring annihilation to all that is desirable in the world. The victory of such a horde would be the undo-

ing of mankind and the degradation of man's social relations to "the law of the pack" and "the rule of the jungle."

But that hideous victory will never be won. We Catholics know that; because the Master promised that the gates of hell shall not prevail against His Church.[1] All Christians know that; because the work of Christ cannot fail. All men of true vision know that; because such an event would be the frustration of the best leanings of man's nobility of nature. Only he who despairs of everything of higher worth can from the depths of his gloomy pessimism voice the statement that religion will pass away from earth, close the gates of joy to a suffering race, and damn it even to an earthly hell.

In brief, then, and by way of recapitulation, we have looked at the fundamental fact of the universal religious sentiment of mankind, and from the study of this fact we have seen that religion is the free dependence of man upon God. The various systems of evolutionistic thinkers with their parodies of theories cannot explain this

[1] Cf. Matt. XVI, 18.

fact, and hence they are at least useless. On the other hand, theism with what it involves does explain it. This does not yet prove that the doctrine of theism is based on objective reality; but it does entitle it to the grave consideration of thinking men. We shall reflect upon the validity of the claims of theism and its consequences in the lectures that follow. For the present we can rest with the presentment of religion in its larger outlines and in its beneficent effects upon the world; and we can thank God for that sacred gift, which has done so much for the race of men, and without which this old earth of ours would be but a prison-house, whose doors would shut out the light of gladness and at the end would open only to the blackness of despair.

LECTURE II

ALPHA AND OMEGA

Truth of theism with its consequences to be established. Consent of mankind first proof of God's existence. Can God be known? Two kinds of knowledge of God. Atheists: practical; theoretical. Position of agnostics; sensists; Kant; modernists. Philosophy of common sense stands. Can know very much about God: can prove His existence. Traditional proofs: from contingent and caused to necessary and self-existent. Personality shown *a priori; a posteriori* from order. Internal finality. Its denial counter to good sense, to sound science, to sane philosophy. Reduction to self-evident principles. God the source of all worth: His sublimity.

When one stands looking up at the falling waters of Niagara, whirling, tumbling, raging with the hoarse rumble of muttered thunder and the irresistible might of an unchained tornado, he is overwhelmed with the realization of his own helplessness. When a man stands on the shore of the ocean, or from the deck of a steamer gazes at the un-

broken and never-ending vista of the wind-swept waves, and lets his imagination travel on over the miles and miles of watery wastes that lie beyond the distant horizon, he shrinks into the insignificance of his littleness. When his eyes mount up, up, and still up the snowclad heights of sky-piercing mountain ranges, or look down into seemingly bottomless depths of cañons, he is dwarfed in the presence of magnificent sublimity. When, in the intellectual realm, he considers the colossal genius of an Augustine, a Thomas of Aquin, or any of the many other giants of thought, he will, unless puffed up with the vanity of imagined importance, wonder at the height and depth and breadth of mental reaches which he cannot compass.

Now, if this is true, how must an honest, thinking mind be affected by the consideration of the ineffable existence and the overpowering splendor of God? Yet in the humility of soul which is the foundation of all true greatness, we must look out over the ocean of God's immensity, scan the transcendent sweep of His magnificence, peer in

awed silence into the unsounded depths of His being,—not to be crushed, but to be lifted up to the real dignity of our human nature.

In the last lecture we studied the fundamental fact of the universal prevalence of religion amongst all mankind in all the ages of the race. We saw that the various theories of evolution are incapable of giving a satisfactory explanation of this free dependence of man upon God, and that theism does explain it. We understood that the necessity of religion flows forth from the doctrine that God exists and is the Lord of man, who is His creature, but a creature endowed with a free responsible spirit, bound by the obligation of a real moral law with sanctions sufficient to urge effectively to its observance.

We did not then inquire into the objective reality of theism, which is the basis of religion. We were satisfied with considering some of the benefits, immense and beyond the possibility of exaggeration, which religion has brought to mankind. We reflected on what has come to the peoples of

the earth from the decline of religion amongst them. And from this sad prospect it was not hard to see what a universal deluge of despair and crushing woe would come to the races of men, if religion's beneficent influence were utterly to disappear from the face of the earth. But we must now begin to consider the objective reality of the truths which underlie the universal religious sentiment. In the remaining lectures of this course we are to ponder on the solid foundations of these doctrines, which are "The Bedrock of Belief." Let us begin with the existence of God, who is "Alpha and Omega," the beginning and the end of all things.

We say that man is bound to profess religion because, to begin with, God exists. Now, what is the value of this statement? Does God exist? The universality of the conviction of mankind, as manifested by the prevalence of the religious sentiment, is already strong and conclusive evidence for the validity of the assertion that He does. For, to doubt or deny a conclusion at which practically all men in the most divers cir-

cumstances and through all ages have arrived, is to reject the capacity of the human mind to attain any truth. This is only another manner of saying what is expressed in a homely way by the words of Lincoln: "You can fool some of the people all the time, and all the people some of the time; but you can't fool all the people all the time."

This consent of mankind, which the rationalists and evolutionists must admit, even whilst they call it delusion or superstition or the result of trickery, is clear evidence that the reasons for God's existence are perfectly satisfying and completely adequate to support the superstructure of belief. The solid arguments on which the consensus of men in acknowledging God's existence is based, are not always grasped in the fulness of their metaphysical subtlety; but they are easily apprehended in the sane processes of common sense.

We have asked, Are the reasons for belief in God sound? are the proofs of His existence valid? The pragmatists (and the modernists are practically at one with them

in this) say that this is a useless question. William James and Leuba and the like tell us that we do not *know* God; we *use* God. Does He exist? How does He exist? It makes no difference, they say: only for the fulness of life act as if He did exist; the rest is useless nonsense. Truly, a wonderful plan of action for an intelligent man! It makes no difference whether one's whole spiritual edifice is built upon the solid rock of fact, or upon the shifting clouds of a mirage or the quaking quicksands of apparent usefulness,—nay, upon a delusion, an error, and a lie!

Such a position will not do for one who values the dignity of his reasonable being. It will not do for us. For us the bases of knowledge must be sure and solid. However, it will be well at this juncture to call attention once more to two different kinds of knowledge which men have of God.

There is the knowledge of common sense, which serves as the basis of religious and moral life; a knowledge connatural to man; a certainty so easily and clearly acquired, without reflex or conscious scientific exami-

nation, that the logical process is scarcely perceived. This first knowledge of God, as the greatest of all beings, the first cause, intelligent, good and powerful to a supreme degree, may often be the result of the educative force of instruction from others. Apart from this, however, it is based upon the perception of the principle of causality, as grasped by common sense, and is but clarified and solidified by more technical examination. It finds an echo in the profoundest depths of the reasonable nature of man, and founds a conviction stronger and more ineradicable than any artificial persuasion. So deep, in fact, has it cast its roots in the fibre of the human mind, that it cannot be torn out by any objection of the most brilliant conjurer of words.[1] As a matter of concrete reality, when there is question of this knowledge of God, we look in vain for atheists, except among those whose viciousness has debased their mental and moral qualities to the level of brute-like degradation.

But there is another knowledge of God,

[1] Cf. Scheeben, *Dogmatik*, II, 29.

which is that of the philosopher and the expert. This has the daring, humble though it be, to dig down into the heart of the mystery, to try to reach an understanding of God which excludes error with regard to the inward nature of the Deity, and to look at difficulties in order to solve them as best may be. This is the knowledge which it shall be our purpose to deepen in all humility. This too is the knowledge with regard to which there can arise the question of atheists.

Beyond all doubt there are practical atheists, by which I mean men who live as though there were no God. A glance at the evil and degradation and crime in a demoralized world is sufficient and sad proof of this. But besides these, there are those who theoretically and positively profess that there is no God. The statistics published by Professor Leuba with regard to the number of professors and students in certain seats of higher learning who doubt or deny the existence of a personal God, is positively appalling. We are tempted to ask, Is it possible that such men can be

found? First of all, we must recall what Aristotle said long ago, that not everything uttered by the lips on this point is echoed in the sincere depths of the mind. Many who call themselves atheists are masquerading under false colors. It tickles the vanity of their puny minds to pose among the "intellectuals": it flatters their pitiable littleness to shock the reverent and the godly: it soothes the terrors of the unwelcome remorse of conscience to turn away from the anger of One who will repay. Often this attitude is a pose and a lie. Not only religious-minded men, but blatant blasphemers of the Deity and deniers of His existence, have said in the presence of the grim spectre of death, "God, have mercy on me!" Furthermore, we may recall the position, ordinarily defended by Catholic thinkers, that there is no such ignorance in the mind without the killing blight of guilt in the heart.

But, even with all this, how can such a state of mind exist at all? In many instances it is because men have been led astray by the evil of their lives; for the

knowledge which does not go down into one's actual life is but too apt to dwindle away and vanish into thin air. It is because men have turned their eyes away from the big fact, which is unmistakable, to the manner of explaining the fact, and because they have not been humble enough to acknowledge that "there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in their philosophy." It is because they have committed themselves to systems of thought which are incompatible with truth in any field. This last reason is the explanation of the sad doubt or denial of God's existence in the minds of many of the wise (!) ones of the world who hold to the relativist philosophies, which deny the value of every judgment on the inner nature of things. To attempt to bridge over the chaos between these philosophies and the common sense philosophy of mankind is like the folly of laboring to square the circle or to solve the problem of perpetual motion.

The passage from the natural and almost instinctive knowledge of God to the scientific certainty about His existence and something

of His nature can indeed be made with safety and profit, though there is room for the slipping which in ages past and present has brought untold multitudes to the follies of polytheism and such like excesses. To make this transition is a work of considerable difficulty, when attacked in all its metaphysical consequences. All cannot make it; and from making it the many are spared, who from the connatural certainty of God's existence are led on to the acceptance of the bright torch of revelation in the hands of faith, and thus escape the pitfalls which have buried so many millions of poor wandering humanity.

In deepening the knowledge of God it is only those who are proud in their own conceit who fail. Though it is a matter of vital importance for them for time and eternity, such as these will not see the force of the solid arguments for the *fact* of the existence of God. Difficulties balk them, as they face the problem of reconciling the apparent contradictions of God's entire freedom and His unchangeable eternity, His merciful love and His stern justice, His provident care

and His permission of evil. Difficulties these are, in very truth, but not such as to afford the least ground for reasonable doubt. Yet these difficulties quite vanquish them; and they turn away from God's existence in doubt or denial, because they are not humble enough to admit that the finite mind cannot comprehensively understand the excellence of the Infinite. They hide their heads in the sand of agnosticism or rationalism, and they cannot (for they will not) see the sun in the heaven of the universe.

First of all, there is the position of the agnostics. Their fundamental claim is that we cannot know God, that we cannot make any assertion, based on intellectual grounds, about the nature of God, nor, for matter of that, about the intrinsic nature of anything. This is the attitude of mind of not a few philosophers and scientists. It is that of Huxley and Spencer and Stuart Mill and others who have largely influenced the philosophic thought of modern times and through their philosophy have touched the religious realm. This agnostic position reduces ideas to names, causality to mere

succession, thought itself to sense-perception. It degrades man from his throne of nobility. Far from ranking man as "a little less than the angels," it makes him but little better than the beasts.

Following in the lead of the pseudo-mystics, who influenced Luther to his undoing; treading in the footsteps of Schleiermacher, who banished any intellectual element from the domain of religion, Immanuel Kant stands forth as the prophet accepted by many. But he is the prophet of agnosticism. By faith, he holds, we may admit the existence of God; nay, we must postulate His existence as the basis of religion and morality: but we can have no intellectual grasp of the truth of God, we cannot pass any certain judgment on the fact of His objective reality.

Now, it is true, this agnosticism is not yet atheism; but it is the steep slope that rushes one into the dark depths of the denial of God. The agnostic is helpless in face of the rational verification of the common notion of God; he is a plaything for the scorn and a target for the scoffs of the out-

and-out atheist. And if, recoiling from the chaos of atheism where death lurks, he would have firm ground to stand on, he must make of God an abstract law, as Taine and Renan do, or a sort of soul of the world taking the place of the individual souls within us, as William James does, or he will fall into some of the other forms of pantheism,—and pantheism is atheism pure and simple.

The modernists afford another sad proof of this connection between agnosticism and atheism through pantheism.[1] Take away the firm foundation of reason; make the object of religion unknowable by the mind; place man in the hands of a blind instinct as the guide to his destiny; let his so-called religious experience rush him unseeing into the acceptance of what reason looks upon as glaring contradictions; let him clasp to his hungry heart the God within him, since he cannot reach the God who transcends his weakness; let him cleave to this immanent God, because after all he is identified with the Deity, as life is one with Life,—and his wretched soul is held fast by pantheism,

[1] Cf. Denzinger, *Enchiridion*, 2082, 2109.

which, once again, is but another name for atheism.

Without entering upon a lengthy philosophical discussion, for which this is neither the time nor the place, we know that the philosophy of common sense stands unshaken before the attacks of sensism and Kantian rationalism. If we are to avoid the folly of out-and-out scepticism; if we are not to contradict the most obvious facts of human experience, we must admit with the common sense of mankind, that we can and do know things by our faculty of reason, which enables us to make use of that little word "is." It is this which differentiates us from the brute. We can say, as the beast cannot, "I *am*," "This church *is* large," "two and two *are* four"; and we can say it, because we have the intellectual apprehension of truth.

Nor is the pathway to knowledge of God blocked, as agnostics say it is, by the infinite distance which separates the finite from the infinite; for though the distance between the two is infinite, there is still a resemblance between them. If God exists

and is Being and All-Power, there can be no other being without resemblance to Him. Finite being, having the reason of itself in the Infinite, cannot be conceived in its inmost nature without relation to the Infinite, just as it cannot exist without some sort of participation of the Infinite. The only thing which bears no resemblance to God is absolute nothingness. Between the finite and the Infinite there is a certain community of nature, though not by identity; there is a sort of affinity, an analogy, a kind of resemblance. Call it by whatever name we will, explain it as we may, the fact of the resemblance remains; and by reason of this resemblance we can truly know very much about God. In grasping our own existence, our liberty, our thought, we have an image, infinitely imperfect, but inevitably true, of the existence, the liberty, and the thought of God. God is all that and infinitely more; and this we know, even though we cannot grasp the full significance of the absolute perfection of God's proper excellence.

So, there is a bridge between the tran-

scendent God and the thinking subject; and the bridge is the very nature of the one who thinks. God Himself we can know, though we cannot know Him perfectly as He is in Himself. By reason's light we cannot penetrate the mysterious depths of the Godhead and comprehend the very manner in which the divine attributes exist in God's inmost infinite nature. But isn't something like this true even with regard to our friends? We know our friends themselves, though we may not perfectly know them as they are in themselves. Nay, in one sense, our knowledge of God is more sure than our knowledge of our intimates. The man who is closely associated with us may stretch forth his hand in friendship at the moment that his heart conceives treachery against us. We may doubt his good will, his kindness of heart, and the rest; there are many things about him that we cannot know with sureness. But we can know with absolute certainty and by the light of reason alone that God is and cannot lie, that He is infinitely wise and powerful and good and holy. Of all the beings that we can know

He is, in a sense, the best known, even as He knows us the best.

That fact, then, is settled. We can know a great deal about God; and the first of these things that we can know and do know and can prove and do prove is that God exists. The consideration of the proofs of His existence is the answer to the rationalists, who go beyond the position of the agnostics and not only say that we cannot know whether God exists or not, but affirm without hesitation that "there is no God." That, in the words of the Psalmist, is what the *fool* says: "The fool hath said in his heart: There is no God." [1]

With great completeness and force St. Thomas of Aquin puts before us the traditional reasons for the existence of God. In the briefest of brief forms the argument comes to this. All that falls within the scope of our experience in the great world of the universe and in the little world which we ourselves are, is subject to motion and change, is caused, is contingent and does not necessarily exist, is composite and im-

[1] Ps. XIII, 1.

perfect, and is an instance of multiplicity reduced to order. From all this, by the common sense principle of causality, in one or other of its forms, the mind rightly concludes to the existence of a being that is the source of its own activity, not subject to change, uncaused, necessary, simple and perfect, and the reason of order in all else. And this being, self-existent, existence itself and intelligence itself, is God.

Or we may put the matter in this way. Beginning with the principle which cannot be denied without violating the canons of common sense and sound philosophy, that whatever has not within itself the reason of its own existence must have that reason in some other being that is its cause, which means to say that what is greater does not come forth from what is less, or that the lower is not to be explained except by what is higher,—it follows with logical necessity, that what is in a state of flux or transition and is not determined of itself can have its determination only from something that is determined by its very being; that what is the result of causality must come from that

which is itself uncaused; that what is contingent is dependent upon what is necessary; that what is composite and multiple and imperfect is due to what is simple and one and perfect; and finally, that order is the result of intelligence. And the result is—God.

Let us look around us in the world. Let us dive into the depths of human thought and volition. What do we see? Everywhere we see beings that are capable of nonexistence, since as a matter of fact they do not always exist in unchanging perfection. The rocks are wearing away, as they have worn away for uncounted ages: the minerals are entering into new combinations and are taken up into higher forms of being. Animals begin to breathe and move, and then they die and corrupt. Man is born, lives his little life, and goes the way of all flesh and is put away from the eyes of men. Take the world of sense and physical science, and accept the latest of modern theories about its formation and development; and the conclusion becomes but the stronger, that at least its mode of motion,

bewildering in the smallest portion of matter, is dying down. If so, it must have had a beginning, or else long ago, nay, almost an eternity ago, it would have come to complete inertness. Take the spirit world of man with his thoughts and volitions: we find him forever changing. Everything is in a state of transition, passing from one determination to another. Things such as these are not determined by their very being; they have not within themselves the reason of their existence. Hence they must have it in another; they were caused by another, that must have within itself the reason of its own existence and must be existence itself.

For the full force of this argument it is not essential that we should come to a beginning of things in time,—though in the light of science the material world cannot be explained otherwise than as having had such a temporal beginning. Even if the series of changes in its evolution is made eternal, the world is eternally insufficient to explain itself.

For, if all the parts of the world are con-

tingent and capable of non-existence, the whole is contingent and capable of non-existence. There is here no question of adding a partial reason of existence to another partial reason of existence, and thus coming to a sum which is capable of explaining itself. It is a question of adding things which of themselves are capable of non-existence to others of a like nature; and the sum of these, even if conceived to be infinite, does not become less capable of not being. Add millions of zeros to other millions of zeros, and the sum is zero: an indefinite series of absolute idiots cannot equal an intelligent man. The whole series, as contingent and caused, must depend upon something or someone distinct from the series. Otherwise, far from explaining these other beings, it would itself still have to be accounted for.

In all this we have been looking at the vast world with its unnumbered units. We might have begun with any single thing,—a clod, a flower, an animal, a man. The line of thought is the same as that already proposed. Either that thing is self-existent

and is possessed of all the perfections connoted by self-existence (which we know is not the case), or it is dependent upon another: this other is either self-existent or itself depends upon another: and so finally we must come to the self-existent being whom we call God.

Nor, once more, can we escape the rigorous logic of the conclusion by adding link after link to the chain of dependence, until it stretches out to infinite eternity. For, such a chain would not sustain itself: it would fall into everlasting nothingness, unless it were fastened to the immovable support of all.

So, from anything whatever outside of us we mount to the sure knowledge of God. And if, in the folly of the subjectivists, we should deny the objective reality of aught outside of ourselves, we cannot without committing intellectual suicide deny our own existence. And from our single selves we can begin the selfsame argument and reach the selfsame irrefragable conclusion.

We may add, merely in passing and without pursuing the argument to its final depth,

that all about us and within is composite and multiple and, as a consequence, imperfect, and as such clamors for a cause outside of itself. Elements diverse of themselves cannot of themselves and as such be combined to form a unity. This union must come from without, from a cause simple, one, perfect,—from God; or else the Sisyphean labor of explanation begins anew. But we need not press this point.

Therefore, from the world outside of us or from our very selves we come to the knowledge of the necessary, uncaused, self-existent Being that is existence itself. But this is not yet God? Nay, but it is. But it is not yet a personal God? Nay, but it is. The steps of the proof of His personality are these: the Being we have already proved is distinct from the world, since He is its cause; He is existence itself, since He is self-existent; he is pure actuality without the least possible shade of potentiality, never becoming anything, eternally being what He is, since He is existence itself; He is one and absolute, He is infinite perfection, and consequently He is intelligence itself,

since He is pure actuality. And all this unquestionably means a personal God.

Each of these steps is sound and solid; yet the subtlety of the argument might discourage some. So, let us follow another path. We have proved the reality of the self-existent Being who is the cause of all outside Himself. We have only to establish His intelligence, and His personality is proved. Now, we can see this intelligence from the order of the world.

To insist upon the marvelous order in this world would appear quite unnecessary. That order is patent to the most casual observer. It becomes but the more striking, the more we look either at the whole universe with its manifold forces working with unfailing accuracy, at the smallest of living organisms, or at the minutest of material particles with the possibilities opened up by scientific investigation. The most confirmed materialists and evolutionists are forced by the evidence of things to admit an apparent finality in the world, though they vainly try to explain it all without a ruling intelligence.

The argument from design or order comes to this. A means cannot be ordained to an end except by an intelligent cause, since only intelligence can grasp the relation of a means to an end. If, then, in nature among the beings devoid of intelligence there are means ordained to an end, these means are thus directed, not by these non-intelligent beings, but by an intelligent cause outside of them: thus nature, which is the effect of the uncaused, Supreme Being, the cause of all, points out that cause as intelligent, and therefore as personal. Now, there are in nature unquestionable examples (it is all one big example) of non-intelligent beings directed to an end, not by themselves, but by an extrinsic intelligence.

It is not imperative to examine into the external finality of things, that is, we need not always know the precise purpose for which these things were made or ordained. We need not know just why the millions of gnats or flies or other insects live and multiply: we need not know exactly why the many noxious or poisonous plants grow in apparently useless profusion. Often

this is quite beyond our vision,—a proof of the limitation of our knowledge. But the internal direction of means to an end within the thing itself is of capital consequence; and this finality is altogether clear and certain.

It is quite sure that the eye is made to see, the ear to hear, the wing of the bird to fly, and so on. To say that the bird flies because it has wings, not that it has wings for flying; that it builds its nest because it must gather straw, not that it gathers straw for its nest; to say that a man hears because he has ears, not that he has ears for hearing; that he sees because he has eyes, not that he has eyes for seeing,—this is to fly in the face of common sense, of science, and of reason itself.

It jars on common sense. For, common sense always distinguishes an organism from the inanimate aggregation of which the materialist prates, and will always agree with the plain good sense of Ruskin, who said: "They (the scientists) come and tell you that there is as much heat or motion or calorific energy in a tea-kettle as in a

Gier-eagle. Very good; that is so; and it is very interesting. It takes just as much heat as will boil the kettle to take the eagle up to his nest. . . . But we, acknowledging the equality and similarity of the kettle and the bird in all scientific aspects, attach our principal interest to the difference in their forms. For us, the primarily cognizable facts in the two things are that the kettle has a spout and the eagle a beak; the one has a lid on its back, the other a pair of wings,—not to speak of the distinction of volition, which the philosopher may . . . call merely a form or mode of force; but then . . . the form or mode is the gist of the business. The kettle chooses to sit on the hob; the eagle to recline on the air. It is the fact of the choice, not the equal degree of temperature in the fulfillment of it, which appears to us the more interesting circumstance;—though the other is very interesting too. Exceedingly so!" [1]

The denial of internal finality is opposed to sound science. The complicated and harmonious structure of an eye or an ear,

[1] *Ethics of the Dust*, X, 126.

appearing as the survival of the fittest through natural selection without a designing intellect, is as little intelligible as it is that the type of a printing-shop, promiscuously huddled together, should reproduce Shakespeare's peerless plays without an intelligence to arrange the letters into words, without the mind and heart of Shakespeare's genius to conceive and express his glowing thoughts. To stand for this is not science: it is folly.

A few years ago a popular magazine produced the reflections of a mechanic who had made a little fortune through a patented meat-chopper and then turned philosopher. There was nothing original in the article, except possibly the manner of presentment, although it was heralded as a sensational novelty. What the writer said was true and amounted to this: "There are seventeen pieces to my meat-chopper; and it takes a clever factory-girl two hours and a half to learn how to put these pieces together. Now, if these seventeen pieces were thrown together in a barrel and shaken and whirled about, I'm perfectly sure that

they would not make my meat-chopper in a million years." And he was right. But what if there had been heaped in the barrel only a crude mass of unshaped and formless iron, or of iron-ore from which the iron was not yet separated? In uncounted billions of years how much chance would there be of the seventeen pieces of his meat-chopper ever being formed, before they were arranged according to his patent? And what was his meat-chopper compared to a bird's wing, to a human eye or ear, to human eyes and ears in unnumbered instances, with harmonious effect and unswerving constancy? How could order ever result without an intelligent designer?

To say that it could is to stultify reason. William James says that the principle of Darwin, Spencer, Haeckel, and the like, about natural selection in the struggle for existence makes shipwreck of the finality of things. Clear minded thinkers, even among non-Catholic philosophers and scientists, have come to see things in truer light. Natural selection destroys the proof from finality! It could do so only by ex-

plaining everything by chance or by a blind necessity.

Now, chance is the absence of any explanation, and to say that order is due to chance is to say that effects are without causes, that order has been born of disorder, that the less has produced the greater, which means that nothingness has brought forth being. And as for blind necessity, even if it existed in the world, it would itself presuppose finality. For, if a result is determined, it must be predetermined by finality. Otherwise either everything or nothing would be produced, determination would come from indetermination, the greater would result from the less,—and there would be an effect without a cause.

From this internal finality, then, from which we can advance to external finality, but need not for the force of the argument; from this order in the world, it is clear that the self-existent, necessary cause, distinct from the world, is intelligent, and therefore is a person. The proof of a personal God stands.

It cannot be overturned without denying

the fundamental principles of reason. It cannot be set aside without rejecting the self-evident axiom, that whatever is must have a reason for its existence, which, for things that are not self-existent, means that they have a cause. To deny this is to deny the principle of identity: for it is to make what is the same as what is not; it is to say that white is not white, and black is not black, that being is not being, and nothingness is not nothingness. All this, I know, sounds like the maunderings of a madman; but it is precisely what Hegel held. For, not wishing to acknowledge God, above and distinct from the world, he was forced to put out-and-out contradiction at the root of everything, and to say: Being pure and simple is equivalent to non-being; it is itself and its contrary; existence is non-existence; reality is nothingness. To be driven to expressions such as these is a fate which we might well deprecate in the case of anyone. But let us face the issue honestly: there is the choice (is there room for choice?),—either God or radical absurdity.

In the following lecture we shall consider

some further truths and examine some of the wrong ideas about God, whose existence we have proved. We shall stand in His august presence and learn to grow in reverence for Him. But from what we have already established we can look up from the depths of our littleness to His overwhelming majesty, and, as the realization of His divine excellence grows in our minds, our hearts too can flare up in the fire of love for Him who is above all.

Remembering that whatever is of worth here below has come forth from Him, we can rise from our lowliness to His sublimity. The truth and the beauty of earth and the majesty of even the material world, but much more the tender sweetness of friendship and love, the innocence of childhood and the mellowness of old age,—in a word, all that makes this world of ours splendid and desirable we can recognize and appreciate. It transports us beyond ourselves. But let us raise up our eyes: let us lift up our hearts. "Sursum corda!" All finite truth and beauty and goodness are but struggling rays from the infinite sun of per-

fection, that is God; only little lost chords of music from the infinite harmony of excellence, that is God; only tiny wandering streams from the infinite fountain-head of everything desirable, that is God; only the faintest of reflections from the unimaginable splendor of Him who is the "beauty ever ancient, ever new."

If we can esteem human truth, let us prize above all infinite truth: if we can cleave to human goodness, let us clasp to our soul's centre the infinite goodness of God: if we can love anything of human value, let us bind ourselves with the unbreakable cords of unfailing loyalty and affection to God. Yes, the commandment which was given as the rule of life by the mouth of the Eternal, which was repeated by the blessed lips of the gentle Christ when He walked the ways of human weakness, is the same law that is whispered in the depths of the human soul and thundered throughout the length and breadth of a dependent universe: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy

mind."[1] If we fulfill this law, the great glad truth of a joyful optimism will brighten our lives. Of a truth, God is in His heaven; and even if all is not yet right with the world (and the sorrows and horrors of war show that now all is not right), it will be right some day and somehow under the providence of Him who is the beginning and the end, Alpha and Omega, our Lord and our God, our God and our All.

[1] Luke X, 27,

LECTURE III

THE LORD OF THE UNIVERSE

Development of true notion of God. Life and liberty not incompatible with changelessness. Omnipotent: provident: just and merciful: infinitely happy. False views. Materialism contradictory. Pantheism: realistic; idealistic. Appeal to modern mind. Results: destruction of ideal of God; death-knell to religion. Other variations of pantheism. Problem of evil in world. Moral evil presupposes God. Physical evil under God's providence tends to higher good. Value of pain. Christian Science and New Thought: subversive of Christianity; essentially pantheistic.

After examining into the nature of religion and finding that it is the free dependence of man upon God; after seeing how the universal fact of the religious sentiment amongst all mankind has no sufficient explanation in the theories of the evolutionists; after understanding how the doctrine of theism with its consequences completely explains the fundamental fact, and how, therefore, even before its entire truth has

been established, it is worthy of serious consideration, we went further, and in the preceding lecture we began the study of the objective truth of theism. We put the question, Does God exist? and can we establish with certainty this fact of His existence? The agnostics, whether positivists or rationalists, reply that we cannot know anything about God, because we cannot know the inner nature of anything, and especially because there is an infinite distance between the finite and the infinite,—a distance which can never be bridged over. But we saw that we can know much, very much about God, and that for knowledge the distance is bridged over at least by the thinking subject. For, even if he closes his eyes to the outside world, from his single self man can come to the sure knowledge of God.

The traditional proofs of God's existence, which have not been overturned by false philosophy and cannot be, we studied. We started with the principle of causality, or with the principle which is even more fundamental, that everything must have a suffi-

cient reason for itself either within itself or outside its being. To deny this is to deny the principle of contradiction or of identity, and to say that white is black, that being is nothingness; and to say that, is to commit intellectual suicide. By this principle, we rose from the consideration of anything that exists to the necessary, uncaused Being, the cause of all else,—and that is God, whose essence is Being itself.

Furthermore, both from the nature of such a Being and from the actual manifestation of intelligent design in the world around us we rightly concluded to the intelligence of Him who is the first cause of all. And thus, from the knowledge of the supreme, uncaused, necessary Being, who is distinct from the things of the world and is intelligent, we were justified in asserting the personality of God, who is the source of all that is noble and true and good and sublime and is worthy of unconditioned homage. We recognized that He is the beginning and end of all things, and we closed with our humbled spirits bowed down before His overwhelming magnificence.

At present let us stand before "The Lord of the Universe," and let us try to know more clearly the truth of His supreme lordship (for that is the firm rock on which religion rests) and to recognize yet more thoroughly the falseness of certain views which distort the truth about Him.

The truth is that God is absolute Being, simple and immutable, yet living and possessed of all perfections, because He is Being itself. The denial of God's life and liberty, and the consequent denial of divine personality, made by Spencer and Bergson and others, is largely due to their misconception about the kind of knowledge which we have of God.

We have seen that this knowledge of ours is true, but incomplete; that it is accurate, but by similarity or analogy. Thus, we do not say that God has being just in the same way as we have it: we are not foolish enough to assert that the manner of intelligence and freedom in God is quite the same as it is in us. Far from it. And so too, we do not say that God is living in the same way in which we are living. He is all that we

understand by life; all that, and infinitely more. Life as such (and the same is true of liberty), does not imply change or alteration. Movement and change are only imperfections of created and finite life, which is steeped in incompleteness and potentiality and is not possessed of the plenitude of everything that it can have. Nay, in material things life is in constant change just because it is forever dying and must repair by the processes of assimilation the inroads of approaching dissolution.

No, it is not essential that a living being should change. What is essential is that it should have within itself the principle of immanent activity, whether of itself or by participation from a higher power. The rock is not alive, because it has not within itself the principle of actions that are initiated and consummated in itself; the plant is alive, because it has, though the form and the end of this activity are from the author of nature and not from itself. The animal has a higher life, because by the senses it can perceive the objects towards which it tends. Man has a still loftier and

nobler life, because he can know the relation of means to an end, because he can be master of his actions and can determine his own choice, although he stands in need of things outside of himself to draw him to activity and urge him to attainment.

All these forms of life are real, but are limited and imperfect. Only Being itself, the Absolute, God, is sovereignly and unchangeably living, because He has within and of Himself all the elements of His activity, and is Life itself, as He is Truth and Goodness.

When we speak of God's unchangeableness we do not wish to say that He is inert and unconscious and all but amorphous, as some have said and do say. On the contrary, we declare that since He is existence itself and absolute Being, He is activity and action itself, knowledge itself, love itself. This is what we maintain, even whilst we are honest enough to admit that we can but grope amidst the grandeur and cannot glimpse the entire solution of the mystery of His eternal activity and the effect of this activity in time, the marvel of His co-

existence with time and eternity, and the secret of His divine liberty.

Omnipotence too is essential to the being of God. Just as light illumines and fire warms, so Being itself can make real and existent whatever does not imply contradiction. As the intelligent and supreme cause of all, God has a providence over the work of His hands. He is just and merciful: just, because, as intelligent and good, He must give to each what is necessary to reach the end which He has placed before it, and because, loving Himself as goodness itself, He must guard His sovereign rights and repress their violation: merciful, because, being all-powerful and infinitely good, it beseems Him to give, to lift up, to pity. Justice is the triumph of God; mercy, His glory and the motive which draws "supreme riches down to supreme poverty."

In this mysterious life of the Deity God is sovereignly happy in His infinite knowledge and love of His own infinite excellence. Needing no creature; thrillingly peaceful and exultantly glad in the unsoundable depths of joy that is Himself; alone, but

never lonely, throughout the pulsing æons of an unbeginning, never-ending eternity,—no, we cannot grasp it all, but we can recognize it and adore.

Such is the notion of God at which we can arrive by the power of reason itself, when it dares to look right ahead and straight up to God, and is neither clouded by the mists of passion nor blinded by the pride which refuses to acknowledge the great and thrilling fact because of our inability to give a complete account of the manner of the fact or of the intrinsic reason of its existence. To expect to comprehend God and to understand the inmost recesses of His unfathomable being is pride unbearable; for to do that it would be necessary either that God should not be God, or that each of us should be divine.

It is not pleasant to turn from light to darkness, from supreme majesty to hideous caricature; but our purpose demands it. And so, we must turn from all this perfection to the travesty of greatness which has been dreamed by some of mankind's erring minds.

Of course, there is first of all the position of the materialists, who will admit nothing but matter. Their doctrine is destructive of the very idea of God: how far it is subversive of all true human nobility and of all sound morality we shall consider later on. Let the materialist suppose matter eternal and living, as he must, if he is to make the faintest attempt to explain this world of ours: even then he is dragged down into the black depths of contradiction. For, even if it is eternal and living and the stuff of which all is made, still of itself it is insufficient to explain its own existence. It is changeable and the substratum of changes in the visible things around us, and as such it is in a state of potentiality and imperfection. Therefore it cannot be the reason of its own existence; for what is self-existent is pure actuality and perfection without limit,—which is precisely what matter is not. Since it is not the reason of its own existence, for its separation from the depths of nothingness it is necessarily dependent, whether in time or eternity, upon the self-existent God.

He, then, who makes matter self-existent and his god, must reject its very existence, as its divinity is disproved; and he who admits its limitations and denies its cause, affirms its existence and denies it in the same breath. There is nothing left for the materialist except to close his lips with the assumed wisdom of apparent humility and take refuge in the dictum of the agnostics, that we can know nothing about "the great unknown." The falsity of this position we have already considered. The idol of materialism has fallen.

Another idol before which many stand (they do not bow, for the very reason that reverence is excluded) is the idol of pantheism in some one of its many forms. In its strict sense, according to which there is but one reality in the universe, pantheism either means that the world is absorbed in God, which is acosmism and the denial of the reality of the material universe, or that God is absorbed in the world, which is out-and-out atheism. The realistic pantheism of some of the ancients and of Spinoza is so patently self-destructive, that the minds of

many have swung back to the idealistic pantheism, which has had such a vogue in modern thought.

The prophet of rationalistic thought, Immanuel Kant, is largely responsible for this. He attacked materialism on the ground of matter's dependence upon consciousness. We can know nothing, he said, about the inner nature of things; and any attempt to establish the objective reality of the world, just as any attempt to establish the objective reality of soul-substance or of God Himself must end in contradiction: all of these are reduced to thought-products. Starting from such premises, his argument could be destructive of materialism only on the assumption that matter has no reality apart from our consciousness of it; and this would be to destroy matter and to fall into an absurdity, opposite to that of materialism, but equally as great.

This fatal subjectivism, advocated by Kant, paved the way for the pantheistic systems of his followers, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. In their hazy theories about everything being an emanation or an evolu-

tion of the Ego or the All-One or the Absolute, God never *is,* but is always growing to realization, always *becoming* something. Yet this evolutionistic pantheism could be true, only if the principle of identity and of non-contradiction were without real value, only if white were not white and black were not black, only if being were nothingness and absurdity were the law of thought and reality.

Without going into a lengthy and subtile discussion of all this, we may rest satisfied with what we have already proved about the Supreme Being. God is Being itself, without parts which are the marks of weakness and imperfection, without succession or potentiality which are the badge of the finite. As a necessary consequence of this, there can be no emanation from God of something which is at once divine and not divine; there can be no evolution in the unchangeable and all-perfect infinity of His being. God is not growing into something: He *is.*

In spite of the radical contradiction of the system, it is remarkable what a hold

pantheism has taken by its appeal to the modern mind. There are several reasons for this. For many evolution is the shibboleth of intellectuality; and pantheism proclaims God's progressive self-realization from eternity by a sort of struggle towards perfection, which is but a higher form of the struggle for existence. Then too, the vagueness of modern thought with its appeal to the religious sense, its exaltation of the clamor of the human heart, its rejection of intelligence and its substitution of feeling and imagination and experience as the sole basis of higher striving,—all this is quite in tune with pantheism, which looks on these experiences as the stirring of the One-Being within us, who is our inner soul and the soul of the world of nature without. Again, modern thought with its acceptance of the growing progress of everything is quite averse to freedom and to anything which might contravene what is looked upon as the absolute unchangeableness of the laws of nature; and pantheism coddles this aversion, since it makes all the inevitable manifestation of the One.

Another phase of the modern mind is its tendency to reduce everything to unity, to dig down to the one ground beneath the multiplicity of things around us. There is, of course, a true unifying principle of all things. God is this principle, not because He is identified with everything, but because He produces all things as their first efficient cause, because He operates in and through all things, because He stands as the last end for which all that is exists, because, in the truest of all senses, He is the source of all thought and volition and reality. But pantheism would have all things, from the atom and force to the philosopher and the saint, absolutely one in the relentless onward march. Yet there must be no hampering of the modern mind. Liberty, which is rejected on one count, is still clung to as the dearest of possessions: there must be no authority placed above man, especially in the realm of thought: there must be no hide-bound dogmas; for again, there is nothing fixed and absolute, but only an endless flux and change. And all these tendencies pantheism caresses and flat-

ters. It tells its adherents to think what they please, or rather to feel what they list, to grasp the fulness of their individual soul-stirring, for it is the God within them.

Does all this sound like the old strains of modernism? It does; for it is modernism again, which knows no transcendent God, but only an immanent Deity. In its subjectivism modernism is essentially pantheistic, since only in a pantheistic system could direct experience touch the Divinity.

What, then, becomes of the notion of God in such a system? Pantheism makes it void. It despoils God of the attributes which are His forevermore. He is no longer a personal being; He is not the intelligent cause of the world, designing, creating, governing with bountiful providence. If not forever unconscious, He attains to consciousness only after endless and almost eternal striving. In other words, He *becomes* God; from imperfection He grows to fulness of being, helpless to determine the direction which this development will take, unable to fix the change towards what is better rather than to what is lower. In brief, He is im-

perfect and changeable and impersonal; and all this means that He is not God and the Lord of all.

It cannot be said by the pantheist that God is the author of the moral world, and much less that He is the moral order of the world, as Fichte declares; for since He is urged on by sheer blind necessity, He is neither good nor evil, and could establish a moral order neither for Himself nor for others. And if it is still maintained, that, no matter what is said, there is a moral order, this only thrusts pantheism deeper down into the depths; for it is to throw back upon God Himself all the meanness and littleness and crimes of the most degraded of mortals,—and this is to put God immeasurably lower than the lowest of debased humanity in its foulest manifestations.

Without dwelling at length on what becomes of man in this concept of the scheme of things (we shall come back to that in some later reflections), we may pause to ask ourselves what we really think of this monstrous idol, which a thoughtless minority of "wise ones" has tried to lift to the

throne of God. Disguise as they may the Moloch's foul features with the veils of a false mysticism, the demon eyes peer through and stab the soul to death: surround the throne of the spectre with the fair trappings of musical words, and soothe the drugged senses with the voice of poetic utterance,—the rasping accents of horror pierce through the gloom and sound the sentence of despair. Pantheism rings the death-knell of religion. Before the pantheistic deity man may grovel in fear, though he may just as well be scornful; but he cannot feel the thrill of love. He may attempt propitiation; yet he stultifies himself in so doing, since his deity is urged on by a necessity that cannot be turned aside. He may pour forth his soul's longing in prayer; but he is a fool for his pains, since the impersonal, unconscious one cannot hear and could not succor, if it did. No; to hold to such a God is to ring down the curtain on a blackened stage, with the death-cry of a plaything of fate shrieking from the depths of a despairing soul.

At the root of all this pantheistic thought

is the fundamental contention that God is not perfect Being, but is becoming something He was not, and is growing to a fuller realization. This idea (old as paganism, for that matter), is found today in the thought of others who are not professed pantheists, but who do not recognize the Lord of the universe.

This is the attitude of some of those writers who may be styled "revolutionary" and who have gained a hearing by the sensationalism of their position. Bernard Shaw is of this type; for he declared that God is "a finite being as helpless as ourselves; somewhat to be pitied, whom we can aid and help, and who in turn can help us." [1] Along the same lines and largely for the same reasons runs the thought of the English novelist, H. G. Wells, who gives us his idea of God in his latest book, *Mr. Britling Sees It Through.* For him, God must put away His omnipotence; the Deity is but struggling for the better against an infinite Necessity. We are told that God is but finite; and the old pagan notion of the

[1] Cf. *Month,* April, 1917.

Greek tragedians and of Plato is revived, according to which the Deity stands over against a blind Fate that He cannot control. Yet He is greater than Fate, or He will be, since eventually He can rise superior to it, not by omnipotence, but by love.

We see here the same old groping after perfection, which we have noted in the position of the pantheists, the same evolution to what is higher and better and nobler. But, on the principles of the pantheists or of Mr. Wells, what guarantee is there, that it will always be an advance instead of a retreat, or that the outcome will be triumph instead of utter failure? None whatever! If God is not Master, and for such men He is not *yet,* then He is not God. This is the outcome of their theory, and this is the contradiction of the very notion of God. No, "Omnipotence cannot be wrested from God: without it Love itself fails."

The reason why Mr. Wells is foiled is the same reason that has been the rock on which the ship of many another proud mariner of thought has split. It is the old problem of evil in the world. This too is

the ground on which many others base their denial of God,—Schopenhauer and Voltaire and John Stuart Mill and the positivists and sentimentalists and sensists. Of a truth, dark with mystery is the problem; and in the last analysis we must bow our heads before the majesty of the divine and must acknowledge that "God's thoughts are not our thoughts and God's ways are not our ways."[1] Yet something of the secret we can glimpse, and in the honesty of our humility we can trust that the darkness will be dissipated, when God will have taken away the veil.

The greatest difficulty arises from the permission of moral evil in the world of which God is Master. But,—and let us note it well,—there cannot be the beginning of a reasonable doubt against God's existence and His infinite attributes from the presence of moral evil in the world. And why? Simply because the very fact of moral evil *presupposes* God's existence. There would be no moral evil, if there were no moral law; and there would be no moral law, if there

[1] Cf. Isaias LV, 8.

were no God who is the Lawgiver. So, the very presence of this moral evil, the very heinousness of guilt bears with it the recognition of the majesty of God. Let us remember this well,—if there were no God, there would be no moral evil; since admittedly there is moral evil, so too is there a God, who is offended and who will repay. Even if we cannot explain the whole problem to the satisfaction of our little minds, we can rest in the assurance that God is great enough to draw good out of evil. It is as St. Augustine said: "There would be no evil in all God's works if he were not omnipotent enough and good enough to draw good out of evil itself." [1]

The problem of physical evil is not nearly so portentous. This we know, that God permits it or sends it for the greater good that arises from it, and He triumphs in His infinite might and love. Only to those who exaggerate the disaster of pain can the difficulty seem insoluble. There are greater things than freedom from pain; and these come forth from the crucible of suffering.

[1] *Enchiridion*, c. XI.

In fact, it may be said of us humans that something is wanting to our development, if we have not known the purifying influence of affliction. Is not devoted sacrifice something of greater value than the softness of pampered gratification? Is not the hero's magnanimity more noble than the sensualist's supine coddling of self? There is a tonic in effort, though it hurts: there is a worthy pleasure in mounting superior to difficulties which try one's very soul. When are we most truly men,—when we shun the very approach of the disagreeable, or when we can "mount on stepping-stones of our dead selves to higher things"?

Nay, all development to what is greater is accompanied by pain, if it is not caused by it. This is the natural verification of the saying of Christ, "Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."[1] It is another exemplification of the great truth, that "he that will save his life, shall lose it; and he that shall lose his life . . . shall find it"[2] in fuller

[1] John XII, 24, 25. [2] Matt. XVI, 25.

and nobler stature. There is a something almost sacramental in suffering nobly endured, not in sullen silence or stern defiance, but in the sacred patience which looks beyond the affliction to the purpose for which the pain must have been sent.

The purpose? Look. We are of human mold, not of angelic spirituality; and it is human and not angelic service that God demands of us. But, since we are partly material and are subject to the attraction of the things of sense, there is danger that we may snatch at things low and vile and unworthy of our native greatness. It is the pruning knife of pain that cuts off the shoots which would hold us away from our destiny: sufferings can snap the bonds which chain us to material and temporal things to the oblivion of things spiritual and eternal. God sends pain for that. He steeps His loved ones in the bitter waters of adversity, and by the piercing sharpness of humiliation He cuts away the gangrene of pride, which would cause corruption by undue self-exaltation and would bring to the grave all merit true and real. Oh, yes;

quite apart from the inspired wisdom of God Himself, Paul was right when he said, that God chastises those whom He loves and scourges every son whom He receives.[1]

At times we see it all. Even amid the horrors of a world-devastating war, do we not glimpse the good things of untold worth that have come to us? In place of the spineless lethargy and the self-centred egotism, which were paving the way for an awful descent of our nation to the abyss of destruction, we have seen devotedness and sacrifice wax stronger under the lash of pain. Instead of the units which in but too many instances were anything but consolidated, we have seen the fire of adversity warm the patriotic love within the nation's borders and fuse the bits that were disunited into a compact mass, unbroken and (please God!) unbreakable.

As I have said, we cannot grasp the whole of God's design. But what we know of Him and what we can fathom of His purpose is enough to make us rest in the peace of humility, enough to make us refuse to

[1] Cf. Heb. XII, 6.

close our eyes to the big outlines of His handiwork just because we cannot recognize all the fine points of detail.

If we stand before a massive piece of exquisite sculpture, as the murky twilight deepens and the setting sun is shining in our eyes and not full upon the work of the artist, we can see the broad lines of the superb masterpiece,—enough to make us sure that there is order and beauty in all the details that we cannot now discern. There in the dusk is an arm apparently not joined to a body; there, a branch of a tree that seems to be without a parent stock; there, a portion of sky which looks like a disconnected bit of uncouth marble. But we know, that when the light is brighter and our eyes are better disposed, we shall see only perfection in the great work, whose parts that are distinctly visioned give promise of what shall be.

So it is with our knowledge of God's plan in the world. We do not see it all; but what we see shows us that the Master-Artist has done His work well. Some day we shall see it all; and meanwhile we can wait, sure

in the conviction that God knows, even if we do not comprehend, that He can draw the better out of the good and good out of evil, that pain and suffering and sorrow are often the most sacred tokens of a Father's love, although we fail to appreciate their value because of the sting of affliction.

It is precisely this mysteriousness of the problem of evil, which has led some to deny that there is any evil: it is this very exaggeration of the utter hatefulness of physical pain, which is so deep at the root of some other manifestations of pantheistic thought that they have won some prominence for themselves in our time.

Under this category come the allied systems of Christian Science and New Thought. I call them systems advisedly, and not churches; for, not a few of their adepts claim that they are movements, not organizations shackled by rigid enactments. This can hardly be said with truth of Christian Science, though it may be true to a larger degree of New Thought, which repudiates its dependence upon the older body of which it is a schismatical offshoot.

I wish to note with decisive emphasis that I do not intend to attack any of the men or women who have given their allegiance to either of these systems or movements. In all these considerations exposition of the truth, and not attack, is and has been my object. But truth demands the statement that these systems are both in contradiction with the rights of God, the Lord of the universe.

With the claims of Christian Science to be "scientific" we need not concern ourselves. Let it be called that, if its followers so will; though, how it can be scientific to deny the reality of the material world, to reject the power of the cognitive faculties of attaining truth in normal conditions, to come into clashing conflict with principles of thought as fundamental as the principle of identity and of contradiction, is very hard to see. But how it can rightly be called "Christian," when, whilst professing to reverence and honor Christ Jesus, it holds itself in opposition, or at least in disregard as to the fundamental doctrine of all Christianity, which is the divinity of

Christ,—this is a something more than hard to understand. And so too with the more recent movement, it is difficult to grasp the significance of the name, *New* Thought, since the tenets of the system are as old as the vaporings of Oriental error and the inventions of theories which have passed away.

One noticeable point is that both Christian Science and New Thought place "Health, Wealth, and Happiness in this life" among what might be called the new beatitudes. Both lay supreme stress upon the healing of bodily ills and the procuring of corporal and mental well-being, as if this world were the be-all and end-all of human existence; and this surely is not the summing up of the gospel of Jesus of Nazareth.

With the psychological effect of some of their methods there is no need to find fault. Suggestion, on which they lay such stress, may undoubtedly do something; nay, in certain lines it can do a great deal; but it cannot do all. The thinking of "joy thoughts" will, of course, aid in preserving and increasing the buoyancy of spirit that is very

desirable. The refusal to worry about cares that breed and foster anxiety's destructive consequences will make for greater gladness and efficiency. But there is nothing startlingly new in all this. This is very much like the natural effect which physicians have known for long years: it is very much like the higher influence of the sweet joy and cheerful gladness which come to one who looks up to heaven with the assurance that all will be well: it is very much the same as the old-fashioned spirit of confidence in God and resignation in the trials which come to us from the hands of our Father who is in heaven. We have no quarrel with these things.

It is when Christian Science and New Thought leave these paths and enter the tortuous ways of philosophy and religious explanation that they are hopelessly astray. Much as the two systems, or as the various exponents within the same school, may differ from one another as to the reality of matter, as to conscious immortality in a future life, and such vital questions, for all that, in their fundamental principles they

are sisters of the same family. Both deny the divinity of Jesus Christ, except in the sense in which we are all divine. And there we touch the seat of the disorder. In the midst of all the talk about reverence and duty and development and endless progress, there is the root-error of idealistic pantheism, which is the destruction of all religion. The positive utterances of both Christian Science and New Thought are forever ringing the changes on "the One," "the All-Mind," "Father-Mother-God": it is asserted that there is "no separation of God from man," "there is but one Self, the God of All Being, expressed in the Christ," "God the Good is all there really is."[1] Now, all this is pantheism pure and simple.

Of course, too, it is the subversion of Christianity (though, it may be remarked, Christianity as such is not now the object of our defense), because, whilst Christ is held to be divine in a certain sense, it is only in the manner in which you and I and all men (and all things) are divine. This destroys Christianity; for the fundamental doctrine

[1] Cf. H. Thurston, *Month*, Oct., Nov., 1917; Jan., 1918.

of Christianity is that Christ Jesus is the Son of the Eternal Father in a unique and incommunicable way in which we are not and cannot be the children of God; that He is not only united to the Godhead in a more intimate degree than any other man, but in a manner altogether different,—a Son by nature and not by adoption.

Yes, the systems are complete pantheism, and, as I have said so often, pantheism tolls the funeral knell of all religion. For, there is no worshiping oneself. There is no binding oneself to moral uprightness, just as there can be no making oneself. There is no reverence for God, since there is no rhyme or reason in offering a homage, which cannot be withheld, if we are all equally determined with the helpless Omnipotent One that is driven along by the spur of blind necessity; there is no sense in trying to win favor with an implacable, unconscious, impersonal monster; there is no justification for prayer or propitiation towards the One-All that cannot hear and could not help, if it heard.

And as pantheism, in its older form or

in its modern adaptations, is the ruin of religion, so also is it destructive of right reason and subversive of the only principles through which one can think and act as an intelligent being. It laughs at the root-principles of identity and causality; it makes something everything, and everything nothing; it revels in the orgy of mental vagaries, whose logical end is unbridled licentiousness and depravity, and at last death and utter despair.

And so, we have looked on the true and the false; we have bowed with reverence before the great God; we have gazed with horror on the Moloch-face of the idol of error. From the vision we can clasp to our minds and hearts the deeper realization of the infinite sublimity of the Creator of all things.

For, God is just that. He is the Supreme Being, who alone has within Himself the reason of His own existence. He is the cause of all that is not Himself; He is distinct from the work of His hands, transcendent and magnificent. He is the fulness of being, existence itself, intelligent,

living,—a personal God. He is Truth, Goodness, Life, Love, Mercy, infinite in all the perfections which belong to Him who *is*.

The gropings of materialists and pantheists are pitiable in their tragic insufficiency. The very contradictions which spring up like noxious weeds along the paths where these "outcasts of reason" have passed, point to the clean, clear way of truth: the grotesqueness of the conflicting claims to which they lead with logical necessity,—claims that are the death-knell of intellect itself,—these afford another proof from absurdity of the unshakable truth of the existence and attributes of God.

Man is the other term of the relation of religion; for religion is the free dependence of man on God, and the necessity of religion flows forth from the very nature of free man as he faces God his Creator. The spiritual freedom of immortal man remains to be firmly established: the fact of God's existence, the reality of His sovereign rights over all His creatures we have already proved. Over all the heights and depths of being God rules; over inanimate and

animate nature, irrational and rational, He reigns with divine dominion. All are subject to Him; for He is the Lord of the universe.

LECTURE IV

"A LITTLE LESS THAN THE ANGELS"

Freedom of creative act. End of creation. Without intelligent creatures the world an insoluble enigma. Man's nature and dignity the other term of relation of religion. Man's soul simple and spiritual. Constant change in man with subsisting identity. Thought proves spirituality: grasps immaterial realities; abstract knowledge of material things; calculated progress. Man may glory in dignity. Free will. Opponents. Root of freedom: extent. Ethical argument. Psychological proof. More thoroughly realized by careful scrutiny. Justification of Christian asceticism. Objections: closed system: conservation of energy.

We have been looking up to God; we have been studying His infinite grandeur and His unspeakable majesty. We have gazed on the white light of truth and on the blackness of error. We have examined the blank denials of materialism, which are the distortions of fact, and the misty generalizations of a pagan pantheism, which are big with contradictions and blasphemies.

God, the uncaused, the reason of His own existence, the designer of the wondrous order in this universe of ours; God, existence itself, intelligence itself, life itself, love itself,—this is the Being, to the knowledge of whom we come from the consideration of ourselves or the things around us. Omnipotent, just and merciful, supremely happy, above and beyond the reach of change He is, because He is all-perfect and pure actuality. Everything that is subject to mutation is distinct from Him and dependent upon Him. He is "the Creator of heaven and earth,"[1] the Lord of the universe.

In the exercise of His creative power, which brought things forth from the abyss of nothingness, God was absolutely free. He was led to create these things neither by any need of them nor by any duty in their regard. He needed them not; for His is the unlimited wealth of complete being and boundless perfection: He could find nothing in creatures that He did not possess, since all that they have or can have is derived from

[1] Apostles' Creed.

His own measureless excellence. He had no obligation in their regard; for He, as the fountain-head of all that is good, could have no need, and, after all, every duty presupposes some such exigency. God might bind Himself in regard to His creatures after He has called them into being: He could not be held in respect of them when they were not. As all-perfection He is the rule of His own actions, and this rule could prescribe no creation as obligatory upon Him who lacks nothing.

So, the act of creation, by which He is the Lord of the universe, is altogether free. God was free to create or not to create; free to create the beings that He chose, in the circumstances and with the degree of excellence that He freely ordained,—although the condition of the creature imposed upon the work of His hands the limitations and imperfections which are the birthmark of natures drawn forth from nothingness.

There is one thing, however, in regard to which God was not free, when He fashioned the beings of this wondrous world, and that is the end for which He made them. He

must be their end. And the reason? This. Every intelligent being, as we know, must act for a purpose. For that matter, so too must non-intelligent beings. But in the case of these last the relation of means to the end is not grasped by them and the end is ordained for them not by themselves, but by some outside intelligent cause; whereas intelligent beings act for the end which they themselves perceive and to which they determine themselves. Hence, God, as supreme intelligence and infinite wisdom, must have had an end in view when He spoke the fiat of omnipotence; and because He is God, that end must have been worthy of His Godhead.

What end is worthy of God? Only God Himself. That is quite clear; and so too it is patent that God must have directed everything to His own blessed self. "Being the Supreme Good, He has the right to all honor, and He demands it because He has for Himself the esteem which is due to the Sovereign Good."[1] To do otherwise would be to disregard His own Deity; and

[1] Scheeben.

that would be to destroy Himself who is above the reach of ruin. Thus to order all to Himself is not selfish egotism. It is propriety and justice and strict right; nay, it is necessity. Yet, once again, it is no searching after individual advantage or personal profit. Such things God gives away: with munificent hand He lavishes the largess of the benefits of creation upon the creatures that are the effect of His pouring forth His infinite goodness. To creatures the profit; but to God the glory, because He is God.

Because infinite excellence is incapable of augmentation, the intrinsic glory of the Godhead cannot receive any increase; and so, God's essential glory is not the end of the creative act. The only thing, then, that remains is that He created because of His extrinsic glory, which is the manifestation of this internal and infinite sublimity, so that it can be known and magnified by His creatures. This point is worthy of emphasis: God created the world that it might manifest His greatness and wisdom and goodness; that it might lead to the knowl-

edge which would find its way to praise and reverence and service. And therefore God made man as He did make him, "a little less than the angels." [1]

Without the presence of intelligent creatures this great world of ours with all its beauty and magnificence and majesty and overwhelming vastness is an unexplained and unexplainable enigma: with the existence of reasonable beings the riddle of the universe is solved, and the place of religion is assured. As we saw in the beginning, religion is the free dependence of man upon God. We have proved the existence of God; and one term of the relation is secured. But this is not enough. There is another term,—and this is free man.

If man were entirely like the material objects that surround him; if he were no higher than the brute creation; if he did not have the power to know and love, and hence to praise and reverence and serve, there could be no question of religion. Dependent he would be upon his Maker; but, if he were not intelligent, there could be no

[1] Ps. VIII, 6.

recognition of this dependence. Furthermore, with his faculty of reason he would be consciously dependent upon the Lord of all, even if he did not have the power of self-determination; but it would not be the meritorious dependence of religion. Unless he were, as he is, the master of his powers, the architect of his destiny, the ruler of his life, he could not give to God the free human worship, which is the soul of religion in this world of ours. It is because man is what he is, that he can and must worship God by the cult of religious adoration.

At present, then, let us consider some of the fundamental truths about man's nature and dignity: let us steady ourselves against the attacks of those who would steal away man's birthright of glory. When they deny his spiritual intelligence or his self-determining liberty, they degrade him from the height to which his Maker elevated him; from his throne they hurl him down into the depths. God made man "a little less than the angels," and gave him dominion over the things round about him, to the end that he might use them as a master, not serve

them as an abject slave, that with upright head and noble heart he might walk humbly amidst the things of earth the uncrowned sovereign in the universe of which God is the supreme Lord.

First of all, in treating of man's nature and dignity, a few words about the simplicity and spirituality of the soul of man. It is hardly necessary for us to prove that we have a soul; for none but the most confirmed materialists could deny that. These materialists do deny it. Spencer, for instance (and his followers are not a few among so-called scientists), says that the most marvelous living organism is nothing more than a complicated mechanism. He holds that the activities of an oyster or a bird, of a worm or a genius, of a cyclone or a hero, of a bacillus or a saint, are different only in degree and not in kind. This is practically to deny life altogether. It is to assert that, after all, animate things are only machines, and that even man is a mere automaton.

The theory is scientifically untenable, even with reference to the lower forms of life. For, machines do not grow, do not repair in-

jury to themselves, do not multiply and produce other machines. In all these activities a something distinct from the physical and chemical forces that are at work, is necessary as an elevating and directing energy.

But whatever may be said of the absurdity of the theory in connection with the lower forms of life, as applied to man it is blinded prejudice gone mad. The soul is the principle of life, the root-force of volition and thought; and the fact that we will and that we think of a thousand and one things is as undeniable a certainty, as that we move our hands and feet. Our ideas rise in our minds as really as the blades of grass spring up from the fertile earth; they illumine the darkness as truly as does the sun in the vault of heaven. These thoughts are real; and if they are real, so too is the ultimate principle of thought,—and this ultimate principle of thought is precisely what we mean by the soul. That soul is a substantial reality; for it is part of man's nature, which is without doubt substantial, since it is the subject and support of modifications and accidental changes.

It is important, as against the false position of the materialists, to establish the solid fact that this soul of ours is simple and spiritual.

It is simple, that is to say, immaterial. Material we may take for what is extended and impenetrable and composed of parts: what is immaterial is free from these conditions. It is not palpable; it cannot be seen with the eyes or grasped by the hands; it cannot be painted or drawn or, for that matter, imagined; but it can be conceived in thought. And the human soul is of this character.

But it is even more; for it is spiritual. This means that its existence, whilst dependent on God and on Him alone, is not proximately dependent upon the body, but is from itself: it means that its activity and its being are not so bound to its material partner, that it cannot act or live without it. The soul is in the body; but it is not in it as a chair is in a room, as a treasure is in a safe, no, nor as a prisoner is in a jail. It is united with the body in such a manner that there are not two distinct entities, but one compound be-

ing that is man. The soul's causality with regard to the body (for it has causality and exercises it) is not efficient, for it does not make the body; it is formal, for it communicates definite reality to its material consort. In man the soul elevates the material powers, making them capable of sense-perception, and, beyond this, it lifts up the sensitive faculties, so as to bridge over the abyss between sensation and intellectual cognition. Yet the soul transcends the body, and acts and lives in a manner intrinsically independent of it.

These are statements. But are they true? Unfailingly true. And the reasons? To begin with, the simplicity of the soul, as against the materialists, is conclusively proved from the fact that we have sensations, in which by one perception we grasp an entire object. However, I do not intend to dwell on this argument because of its abstract technicality. But we can see the same truth quite clearly from the following simple consideration.

Scientists affirm, and materialists are among the most ardent advocates of the es-

tablished fact, that all the parts of the body, even the most solid and resistant, are being perpetually decomposed and carried away on the flood of life. Make the time seven years, as the common notion has it; make it thirty days, as some maintain it to be: whatever the lapse of time, it is quite certain that at this moment there is not in us a single atom of matter which was there in the days of our childhood. Yet for all that, we are the same, and we are conscious of our identity. In our recollections we can go back to different things that have happened to us: we are quite sure, not only about various internal conditions which have affected us, but of external circumstances which have had to do with our identical selves. In spite of all the changes in us and around us we are immovably conscious of a something that has remained constant, unshaken, unaltered. We can say: "I was sad, and I am glad; I was ignorant, and I have learned many things; I was a child, and I am a man or a woman." This "I" has remained throughout all our existence,—and we know it. What then? Why, this. Since there is

nothing material in us which has lasted through it all, there must be something immaterial, incorporeal, that has remained without mutation and is the reason of our substantial identity throughout the whole process. That something is the soul, distinct from matter and simple.

But this is not all. The soul of man is not only simple and immaterial. That may be said of the vital principle of the brute. Man's soul is more than that: it is spiritual. This is a thing immeasurably greater; this lies closer to the root of man's dignity; this lifts him up very near to the angels.

And how is the fact of this spirituality, this independence from matter established? From the nature of the activities of the soul; for from the operations of a being we can rightly argue to the nature of that being. If in man there is an activity to which the soul alone can mount and which it can accomplish as the sole agent, free from intrinsic dependence, isolated, and transcending any and all material conditions, then by the very nature that God has given it the existence of that soul is transcendent and free

from all intrinsic dependence upon matter. Now, the activity which thus points out the inner nature of the soul, is thought. Thought proves the spirituality of the human soul.

In the first place, thought grasps realities which are absolutely immaterial; and since the effect cannot be above its cause, the principle from which these thoughts proceed cannot be dependent upon matter: as its object is immaterial, it too must be spiritual. No one can deny that we do actually think of things of this character. We think of truth, goodness, virtue, gratitude, love, devotedness, patriotism. We think of spirituality, of angels: we think of God, who is above and beyond any material limitations, and we prove His existence.

Yes, we think of all these; and unquestionably they are all realities. But are they bodies? Are they material? Absurd! We do not define self-sacrificing devotedness in terms of length and breadth and depth; we do not say that it is so long or that it weighs so much or that it is so many thirds or fourths of something else. If we would un-

derstand patriotism, we speak of the love in the inmost centre of a man's soul which makes him so prize his country, that he joyously pours forth upon the altar of sacrifice his labors and sufferings and his heart's best blood. We may compare it to a fire that flames or to a heart that throbs, but, after all, we cannot reduce it to units that may be touched by the hand or seen by the eye of flesh. And so of the rest of these spiritual realities of which we think. They are altogether cut off from material conditions; and the thought which grasps them is equally immaterial and free from the thraldom of matter. It is a force independent and transcendent in its nature and existence, as in its manner of activity. It is spiritual.

The fact that we have these thoughts of immaterial realities is quite unconditioned by the system by which we explain the manner in which these ideas arise. Let the ideas be inborn, infused into the soul from the dawn of its creation; let them be derived from the beginnings of sense-perception: the fact remains that they are there, the concepts of spiritual realities,—and that is all that is

necessary for our argument. As a matter of concrete fact the mind of man does receive from the senses the elements on which it begins to exercise its activity: it is true that the imagination goes before intellectual cognition in the fashioning of primitive ideas. But what of it? This, indeed, shows that the soul is made for union with the body; but it proves nothing against the self-subsistence of the soul.

The process of spiritual thought begins in sense-perception? Yes; but it does not end there. If a man were to start on a journey from here to the war-torn lands of Europe, he would of course begin the trip by land: he would board a train bound for the East. But what sort of a fool would he be, if he were to maintain, that therefore the whole journey from this place to the heart of bleeding France must be made by land, that there is no water between here and there, and that America and Europe are but one continent. It matters not where thought begins; the important point is where it ends,—and it ends in spirituality.

But, besides the fact that we think of im-

material things, there is the other fact that even in thinking of things that are material we do so in an immaterial manner. As our personal experience testifies, our knowledge of things is not intuitive, but deductive: we do not directly grasp the essence of anything, but come to the abstract knowledge of it by reasoning back from the qualities with which it is clothed. Think, for example, of a church; think of a pew; or think of a tree, from the wood of which the pew is made. Surely a tree is a material object; but we do not think of it in a material way. We imagine, just as we paint, this or that tree; but we think of "tree" in general, in the abstract; and in the material order of things such a universal, abstract tree does not exist separated from all the conditions which particularize it in its concrete existence.

And the wonder is, that among the concepts, of which our thoughts about such a material thing as a tree are formed, there are many whose object has absolutely nothing to do with matter. Take the idea of "tree" and analyse it. What do we find? It is a being, substantial, living, of such and such a

kind. But, being? That says nothing at all about matter; for there are many beings quite apart from matter. Substance? Again, not a shadow of a material concept. Living? Nor here do we find the traces of anything material. And thus our thoughts about the most material of objects are abstract, and have many elements that are no more material than would be found in thoughts about a pure spirit. That is the second proof of the spirituality of the soul.

We might add another convincing proof from the fact that the soul can think of its own thoughts; for this consciousness of its own thought shows that the soul has an activity in which the body has no immediate part and no direct intervention. But, without dwelling on this, we can conclude this part of our consideration by calling attention to man's conscious and calculated progress along the highways and byways of science up to the heights of the arts of civilization.

Man not only knows immaterial things, and material things in an immaterial manner; he not only has concepts which are di-

vorced from the particularizing circumstances of time and place and concrete existence: he also formulates principles and axioms, and with these as torches to his feet along the darkness of the road he marches on to triumph. He learns himself and his activities and the laws of these activities; he learns the material universe and the laws that govern its wondrous workings; he learns much about other intelligent beings and of their manner of living; he has invented the signs of speech for the interchange of thoughts with his fellows; he has mounted up to the great Cause of all and with the arms of knowledge and love has embraced God Himself. And whilst worshiping the Lord of nature, he has mastered nature itself; he has bridled the powers of inanimate creation to serve his will and to labor for his advantage. Neither height nor depth nor solitude nor vastness has crushed the audacity of his daring spirit. He has conquered the earth and the fulness thereof by the might of his intelligent soul. And such a soul is spiritual.

Well may man glory in his dignity, though

he should not glory as if he had not received from God all that he has and is. Great is man, with a greatness beyond the magnificence of aught that is material. As he gazes into the measureless depths of the spanning skies and sees the golden sands of starlit glory on the shores of a boundless space, he can hold his head high; for his sweep of intellect goes out beyond the farthest sun and reaches unto the infinite. In his physical weakness he may bend before the crash of the tornado or the rush of the whirlwind; but he need not quail, for he can harness the power of earth to his chariot of progress and go on to new conquests. He may turn his awed eyes to the beauty of earth, which is the jeweled footstool of the Omnipotent; but he need not be abashed, for from his own mind and heart, colored by fancy, he can "body forth the forms of things unknown and give to airy nothing a local habitation and a name," and can thrill the souls of men with the higher love-tinged beauty of thought and art. Little world as he is, and only little as compared in his physical powers with the great universe, man can look undaunted at

it all; for he is greater than it all by as much as the spiritual transcends the material.

And the aureola of his glory shines still more brightly. Man can front unbroken the onsets of nature and of his fellow-mortals; he can look undismayed on the ghastly visage of disaster or death; he can stand unmoved amidst the crash of worlds. He can hurl his defiance into the face of earth and hell; nay, he can stand up before the great God Himself and say "I will" or "I will not." For, his simple, spiritual soul is free. Here is the reality of most tremendous import: here is the fact of immense consequence to us in our investigation of the necessity of religion. To say that through the will the soul is free is to assert that it has the power of self-determination, that its activities are not necessitated by forces outside of itself, that, placed before an act with all the prerequisites for action present, it can act or not according to its own choice.

Although the consequences of the denial of free will are simply appalling, it is strange how far that denial has spread, whether under the name of fatalism or of

determinism in its many forms. Of course, the most uncompromising opponents of free will are the materialists of different stripe, who deny the spirituality of the soul. Yet idealists too have fallen into the same error. Thus, Kant with his impassable abyss between the world of experience and the world of thought, whilst admitting as a postulate a transcendental freedom, as the foundation of religion and morality, denies this liberty in the world of experience. For him, man's whole life, as revealed in actual experience to himself and others, is rigidly determined.

After all, the materialists are more logical in this matter; for, to reject the liberty of the human soul it is necessary to deny its spirituality, since man's freedom flows forth from the spiritual nature of his human soul.

The thinking, spiritual soul of man conceives not only such or such a concrete good, but abstract, universal, absolute, perfect good. Now, on the one hand, the infinite good, which alone could exhaust the desirability contained in goodness, is not adequately comprehended in this life, and therefore cannot exert what would be a necessitat-

ing influence upon the spirit of man. On the other hand, no finite good can force the will to a choice, because, not realizing in itself the full ideal of goodness, but presenting some imperfection which may be the occasion of the will's drawing back, it can never conquer the resistance of a faculty whose adequate object is universal and perfect good. Good in general is of vaster extent and more precious value than any particular finite good. If, because it is an abstraction, it cannot itself be the object of any effective choice, though the mainspring of every volition, still it can keep the will back from any particular finite good, which would connote a restriction of the scope of the will's activities.

The will, it need hardly be said, cannot choose without some motive; for freedom of choice is not irrational activity, nor is it license gone mad. Some good must be presented by the intellect. But in the presence of any finite good, and even before the infinite good imperfectly apprehended as it is in our present state, the will is free to act or not to act, according to its own self-determination. The free act is not a "cause-

less volition," as some have called it. The will is the cause, not of course of itself, but of its act of free election by the tremendous power that likens it unto the uncaused Deity.

Neither is it asserted that we are free in all our actions. There are spontaneous activities. There are actions which follow the path of least resistance, either as the result of negligence or as the effect of habits that we have formed. Here too, however, the acts may be reductively free. But the point is, that in our conscious activities, where interests of greater moment are at stake, we unquestionably do exercise this power of self-determination and are the masters of our own deeds.

Though we may not be able to explain how we determine ourselves by our free choice, we need not turn away from the solid fact that we do thus determine ourselves. We are fools, if we deny electricity to be a fact because we cannot explain it: we are fools, if we reject the fact of thought because there are difficulties in the explanation of the origin of ideas: we are fools, if we repudiate the fact of life because we cannot lay bare

all the mysteries that lie hidden beneath the surface. We should be just as foolish, if we were to cast aside the fact of liberty because the whole of the process of freedom is not clear to us. It is facts that we are facing, not theories. And the fact is that we are free.

The first proof of this fact is found in the consent of mankind at large, as manifested in their ethical notions and convictions. There is no denying that duty, moral obligation, responsibility, and the like are ideas which the world over and at all times are actually present in the minds of normally developed men. These notions imply their conviction that man is master of his actions. To say that he is not only affected by heredity and environment, but is positively and inevitably necessitated by them, is to fly in the face of the consent of all mankind.

All sane men, unless touched by the sentimentality which would reduce all crime to a disease, or by the absurdity which would reduce all heroic effort to the necessary outcome of physical or psychic causes, say that a man deserves reprobation and punishment

for outrageous enormities and praise and reward for self-sacrificing heroism. We do not blame or praise a beast or an insane man for actions of whatever kind, though we may defend ourselves against injury from either of them. And all this is to say that man is responsible for his actions in such a way that he is truly their author. So true is all this, that determinists themselves are forced to admit that men mean precisely this when they use the terms to which we have referred; but, they add, it is all a gross delusion and must all be changed. Their very admission condemns them; for, if all mankind is hopelessly wrong, then men are incapable of attaining truth; and to hold this is to clasp the mocking demon of scepticism to one's heart and to commit intellectual suicide.

What morality becomes in the hands of the determinists we shall consider more at length in the following lecture; but the sight is horrible to contemplate and paralyzing to dwell upon. They make God Himself the author of all sin, or they deny sin and make it of parallel value with virtue. To them a Bene-

dict Arnold or a Washington is of equal worth; a Nero or a Peter and a Paul; a monster drunk with the blood of mankind or a hero who pours forth his life in defense of home and country; a licentious profligate ravening like a beast of prey or an unstained maiden preferring death to dishonor. To them it is all one; for after all man is nothing but a higher brute,—or lower, because of his faculty of devising more degrading excesses than even a beast could crave. Deny liberty? This is to tear away the gates that hold back the flood of defilement; it is to invite all men to lust like unchained bestials and to go down to utter degradation and despair. Thank God! the whole wide world of men and women, in spite of exceptions that are blots upon the scutcheon of the race, have been wiser than the theorists and have clung to the truth of man's freedom.

And this persuasion of theirs is not an instance of the wish being father to the thought. It is but an example of careful attention to the testimony of consciousness itself; for we are conscious that we are free. We deliberate before placing acts of serious

importance; we weigh the motives which we have for one or other course of conduct. When we choose, we are conscious not only of what we do, but of how we do it, and we feel that while doing one thing, we could have done the other. When we have chosen, we still consider that we have determined ourselves to the line of conduct adopted; we experience either satisfaction or remorse, according to our voluntary election of what was worthy or unworthy; we distinguish quite clearly between acts in which we deem ourselves free and those which are altogether beyond our control.

All this is true, and it is only more thoroughly realized by a careful scrutiny of the acts wherein liberty of choice is exercised.

In the icy waters of a freezing lake forty champions of Christ's religion stand braving the blasts of a wintry storm in testimony of their loyalty to Him who died for them. On the shore the guards keep watch, and have in readiness warm baths and solacing comforts for any of the warriors who will forswear his allegiance to his heavenly King. Endless hour drags on after endless

hour, and the fight goes on. To the end thirty-nine heroes face the foe, looking calmly at the death of freezing torture. But they could not help it? They could not do otherwise? Look! One stumbling figure (but one, thank God!) comes out of the freezing waters, steps forth upon the shore, holds trembling hands towards warmth and comfort and life,—a traitor to his cause. But he could not help it? He could do nothing else? The traitor gives the lie to those who would belittle the martyrs' glory: the martyrs' fidelity brands the traitor with the mark of shame.

A plague is raging in a country, and death is cutting its victims down with relentless sickle. The dead are lying unburied; the living are tottering on the brink of the grave, but clamor for assistance to soul and body. A physician looks upon his home and loved ones, and from the sight turns his tearful eyes to the helpless stricken ones. A minister of God hears the call of the wounded erring ones of the Master. Both go into the pit of death. But they could not help it? It is false! They know as they face their de-

struction, that, had they wished it, they might have chosen the easier way.

Over in what has been called "the white hell" of the trenches, in the biting cold of freezing mud and chilling rain during the days just past, many a stout-hearted hero in khaki has been facing the foe. Personal discomfort, the agony of long days and nights in the teeth of the storm and the riot of shot and shell are motives enough for a craven soul to get away from it all, if only the danger of detection and the biting stroke of punishment are precluded. But the call of duty and the voices of loved ones for whom he is braving everything and the strong urging of loyalty to country that thrills his heart,—all these say, "Stand!" There may come the temptation to end it all by going over to the enemy, by an undetected flight, perhaps by the sharp, quick way of self-destruction; but he fights it down after facing the issue squarely. Does he go the coward's way? If he does, it is with the full consciousness that he is doing what he might not have done. Does he stand? The thousands do,—God bless them!—and they know

that they might, had they chosen, have been faithless to their trust.

To say that all these must follow the strongest motive and must go the way of the greatest attraction is hideously false, unless one misuses words, and calls the strongest motive and the greatest attraction that which one actually chooses. But to say that, is to say that one wills what he wills; and this, as a statement of scientific explanatory value, is sheer nonsense.

So, man is free. Need I add, that one can strengthen this peerless power of freedom by the exercise of self-control? Of course he can. In proportion as a man yields to instinctive inclination and denies himself none of the satisfaction which he knows he can deny himself if he will, in the same proportion does he diminish his power of self-determination and sink into a kind of self-imposed slavery. And the more he restrains mere impulse and schools himself to command himself in the midst of the allurements of pleasure, the more does he grow into the full stature of the freedom, which is the noblest prerogative of true manhood.

The natural justification this, of Christian asceticism.

Before concluding it may be well to say just a word about two basic objections against both the spirituality and the freedom of the soul, very common among "scientists." Two principles are adduced, which fight against both these prerogatives of the soul. There is what is called "the principle of the closed system," and there is the other principle called "the principle of the conservation of energy." The principle of the closed system may mean many things, some admissible, some destructively false. If one takes it as a working hypothesis of physical science, according to which it is wise to look for a material cause for a material effect, there is no reason to find serious fault with it. But to look upon it as a principle of universal application, which excludes extra-cosmic and spiritual activity from the material world, is to go too far. This is not scientific; for it goes beyond observed and observable facts. In this last sense, the postulate of "the closed system" (for it is only a postulate, and can never be

proved) must be repudiated in the name of sound logic; for logic has never reached such a conclusion, since it has no premises that lead to it. It must be rejected in the name of honest observation; for observation proves quite the contrary. To mention but one fact, the results of the spiritual ideals in this workaday world demonstrate the actual influence of forces that are beyond the sphere and the power of matter.

The cognate principle of "the conservation of energy," which is the very "Achilles" of determinists and materialists, asserts the constancy of the sum-total of energy in the universe, and therefore excludes any spiritual factors from modifying the march of events. This is either an obvious begging of the question, or it affords not the slightest objection against the spiritual forces modifying the *quality* of the energy in the world, even whilst leaving constant the *quantity,* which, so far as its availability is concerned, is ever tending to dissipation.

Furthermore, both of these principles, as directed against the soul, have been refuted by the fact of the existence and the activity

of the spiritual freedom of the soul. It will not, then, be necessary to delay upon these considerations. The fact stands out big and unmistakable, that, no matter what the theorists may hold, the spiritual will of man does determine itself,—and man is free.

If some of these reflections, technical in their philosophical subtlety, are lacking in the personal appeal that touches the emotions of our souls, let us take heart from the thought, that, if their consideration has been a labor, it may well be called a labor of love in the cause of truth. True religion is based upon sound philosophy. If we doubt it, conviction should be driven into our minds by the proud, but unfounded, boasts of one of the most self-assertive of the adversaries of all religion and all morality. Ernst Haeckel glories that his much vaunted monistic view of the universe "marks the highest intellectual progress, in that it definitely rules out the three central dogmas of metaphysics—God, freedom and immortality."[1]

God, liberty, immortality gone? God be

[1] *The Riddle of the Universe*, p. 232.

praised!—that is false. The immortality of man is included in his spiritual freedom, and this has been established with the certainty with which we have proved the existence and attributes of God.

God the Creator and man the free and responsible creature,—there is the heart of religion. Right reason evidently requires that man should live out in his life of conscious effort the relation pointed out by the condition of his being. He is dependent on God and he is free with the liberty which is his patent of greatness; and therefore he should bow down before that God in the deliberate joyous praise and humble reverence and worshipful service that spell religion.

That he not only should do so, but is bound by an inflexible obligation so to act, we shall consider in the next lecture; but it all follows from what we have thus far established. God is God; and man, who is but "a little less than the angels," is most a man, when he is great enough to employ his God-given liberty in so shaping his course of life as to make himself worthy of the God who gave him all that he has and all that he is.

LECTURE V

THE BOND BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH

Proper for man to profess religion. Must he do it? Meaning of moral law. It exists. False theories. Kant: divorce of religion from morality. Moral Evolution. Its supreme canon specified in its "pentalogue." Five gratuitous assumptions. Consequences of system. The truth. Outline. Direction to end: irrational beings: reasonable creatures. God's manifested will the reason of obligation. To break this moral bond is to bind self in chains of slavery.

A proverb has it that "order is heaven's first law." That, no doubt, is true of heaven; but it is also true that order is earth's first law as well. Disturbance and confusion are not only the bugbears of a nervous temperament; they are evils from which we fly by the instinctive force of our nature. "Anarchy" and "chaos" are two of the most damning terms of reprobation for any system, whether physical, intellec-

tual, or moral. Now, from the considerations that have occupied us up to the present we see quite clearly what right order requires of man in relation to God.

God, the self-existent and all-perfect Being, the cause of all that is outside of Himself, sublime in His personality, has acted as He freely willed to act and has drawn forth from the abyss of nothingness the whole of the big, wide world. In this world is man,—man with his greatness and his capabilities; with his spiritual soul, which in its activities and therefore in its existence is intrinsically independent of the body it animates; with his intellect that can grasp immaterial truth and even the infinitude of truth, which is God; with his free will that has the awful resemblance to God's uncaused being, whereby it can decide itself to a course of action without extrinsic determination. Man is indeed a "microcosm," a little world in himself, just as he is the apex of perfection in the world that falls under the senses: he is in very truth but "a little less than the angels." But with all his greatness, which is woven into the woof

of his littleness, he is the creature of the great God.

As a creature of the Most High he is essentially and irrevocably dependent upon God. The realization of this truth at once makes it evident to every right thinking man, that order requires that man should live in accordance with this dependence. It is according to his nature, it is proper, it is desirable, it is good for him to live as a creature, but as a creature endowed with freedom. In a word, it is altogether the appropriate thing for him to profess religion, which is man's free dependence upon God.

But this is not yet the end of the matter. Is this not only a proper thing for man to do; but is it more than that? Must he do it? Is he bound to do it? Quite evidently he is physically free to do otherwise; and the wretched experience of what we see around us and have gathered from the record of history has shown us and does show us, that, as a matter of concrete fact, many men do actually refuse to live out in their lives this free dependence upon their Creator.

Yes, man is physically free with regard to

religion. But is he or is he not morally bound to worship and serve God? The answer is, that beyond all question he is bound to profess religion. And the reason of the necessity is the moral law, "The Bond Between Heaven and Earth."

Let us consider this moral law, especially as it applies to the necessity of man's worship of God; for this worship of God is the main object of our considerations in this course of lectures.

The existence of the moral law means that in His infinite wisdom God has seen the way, in which man, by the orderly activity which will attain his true happiness, is to be led to give to God the glory that was the object of God's creative act; and that He has imposed this line of conduct upon man with the force of the divine will binding the will of the creature to the established order. All law, in fact, is the exact rule or standard or norm, by which a being is moved to action or held back from it. That nature is ruled by constant and universal laws is the axiom that lies at the base of all investigation in the physical world. The forces and tendencies

to a constant and fixed mode of activity, implanted in material things by the Creator, are the expression and the effect of the will of the intelligent Being who is the Lord of the universe. But in a stricter sense law applies only to rational beings, who are directed in their moral activities by a compelling force, which whilst necessitating is consonant with their freedom. Obligation, imposed by the will of the superior, is the essential element of real and strict law, and binds the will of the subject to actions which make for the common good.

If there is such a thing as a moral law; if there is such a thing as God commanding under moral necessity the observance of order in the world; if the universal consent of mankind is right, as it must be, when it recognizes the notions of duty, guilt, remorse, reward and retribution, then the most fundamental precept of that law must regard man's attitude towards God, and is thus the basis of all other obligations of whatever kind. Now, there is a moral law, and it comes from God. God has written it in the hearts of men; He has manifested it in

the dictates of conscience; He has placed it as the norm according to which man must live and according to which he must be judged by the Lord of all.

As this matter is of such immense importance, it will profit us to look at it in some detail. We shall, therefore, examine both the false and the true explanation of the undoubted and undenied fact of the existence of the moral notions of right and wrong and duty and obligation, which all men have.

In examining the false theories it will not be necessary to review the tenets of the materialist philosophers of the eighteenth century, who in the pursuit of pleasure tried to revive the pagan principles of Epicurus. From the gross sensualism of this school the pendulum swung back until it touched the intellectualism of Kant.

For Kant the root of all authority and the final source of obligation was found in reason itself. In his system reason obliges of itself: it places the law and is autonomous, and the absolute form in which it issues its commands is the categoric imperative, "Act! and so act, that thy act be fit for law

universal." We are obliged to fulfill the law simply and solely for the law itself and because it is the law of our reason. To do anything because someone else has placed the necessity upon us, even though that other be the great God Himself, is out-and-out immorality.

Now, in such a system obligation is forever an insoluble riddle. For, if man binds himself voluntarily to his own law, he can remove the obligation which he has imposed upon himself,—and there is the denial of the obligation which is asserted. If, on the other hand, man is necessarily subject to this obligation, whence comes the necessity? Not from man himself; for he can no more be his own subject than he can be his own superior; he can no more bind himself than he can make himself. To assert the contrary is to declare that he is what he is not, and is not what he is. Whence comes the necessity? The silence is unbroken by any answer: all is mystery. Answer there can be none, except in what the theory denies, namely in this, that the will of God imposes this necessity upon man, and that this ne-

cessity is recognized, because, in virtue of the constitution of our being, we spontaneously form judgments of the practical as well as of the theoretical order, and find from these principles the manifest will of the Supreme Director of all things.[1]

In practice, the worst feature of Kant's theory is the proud exclusion of God and the absolute separation of morality from religion. Even if one honors and serves God, it is not because God so ordains, but because man condescends to bind himself to some manifestations of homage to a subservient Deity. What pride and self-sufficiency! If sensualism could be called, as Carlyle styled it, "the philosophy of the pig," Kant's ethical system with its supercilious pride might well be termed "the philosophy of the devil."

This tendency of absolutely divorcing morality from religion and from God has been followed very widely since Kant inaugurated it. We find it in the systems of Herbart, Hartmann, Wundt, Paulsen and others; we meet with it in the "Societies for

[1] Cf. *Cath. Encyc.* s. v. "Law," p. 55.

Ethical Culture," which are found throughout the land. But to attempt to enforce morality without religion or to have any real moral system without God, is to try to have water mount higher than its source. It cannot be done. If, moreover, all men and women must be trained in morality and religion, as they must, what of the greater necessity with regard to the young? Theirs is the greater need; for, as Aristotle wisely said, we do not come into this world completely made and perfected, but only capable of rounding out our powers, physical, intellectual, and moral.[1]

Apart from this disastrous tendency to exclude God from morality, in which respect Kant has had many followers, the ethical system of the "philosopher of Königsberg" has very few adherents. Much more common among the champions of "independent morality" are those who try to explain the origin of obligation or duty by experience and evolution. Haeckel and Spencer with their system of "moral evolution" are the high-priests of this irreligious theory.

[1] Cf. *Cath. Encyc.* s. v. "Ethics," p. 560.

The many who take this system of moral evolution as the sum of knowledge about the things of the soul, though its authors deny a soul, will hardly deign to discuss the matter with those who are opposed to their tenets: they plume themselves on being the advocates of "pure science" and despise those who cling to real facts rather than to airy assumptions. Owing to the wide spread of the poisonous principles of this school it will be of considerable advantage to us to examine this matter more closely.

It is not with the origin of the physical universe according to the tenets of materialistic evolutionists that we have now to do: we have already touched upon that sufficiently. We are to look at their explanation of the moral world with its noble and ennobling ideas of devotedness to duty, to country, to God.

All life, they say, is essentially the same. It arose from the evolution of the brute force of the universe, until through gradually progressing forms it emerged into man; and it will go on, until from the crushing of his weaker fellows the "superman"

has appeared, free from all the ills that flesh is heir to. And in like manner, they continue, from a presocial state where there was no law, no morality, no religion, but the anarchy of desires riotously followed, there grew up a sort of association under stronger leaders, as the consciousness of the connection between personal good and actions which made for the common welfare was more and more realized. Fear was the origin of all reverence for authority; fear of the more savage leaders evolved into respect for civil power; fear of the ghosts of departed ancestors gradually grew into the feeling of religious awe. All this was transmitted by heredity, until finally men no longer remembered the cause of their sentiments and called by new names the old things forgotten long ago. As Renan says: "By the force of chimeras they have finally managed to get from 'the good gorilla' a surprising moral effect." [1] "The good gorilla" is his name for the man of their theory. And Renan's caustic characterization is well

[1] *Future of Science*, p. XVIII.

deserved; for to them man is only a higher beast, that has forgotten the blows which beat his ancestors into submission and the ghosts that made his ignorance cringe in terror before the awfulness of the unknown.

The supreme canon of this moral evolution, which is only the blind unfolding of a fixed necessity, is to follow the current, to obey the law of progress. Whither that would lead, it takes no prophet to discern: whither it has led those who have bowed down before the idol is printed in letters of blood and defilement on the scrolls of history. I have said that to follow the current is the first law of the system. I had better call it a counsel; for in the whole theory there is no law, except the irresistible onward march of an unseeing necessity. Still, law or counsel, it stands as the basis of a provisional morality, changing as all else changes in this shifting world. This supreme law or counsel may be specified more in detail by the tenuous "commandments of moral evolution." God has given us His decalogue: the morality which is divorced

from God has its pentalogue with five capital invitations gleaming from its siren page. What are these commandments?

To begin with, progress, which is back of everything, tends to the increase of life in the length and intensity of living; and so, the first word to fall from the lips of the idol of moral evolution is: Live the largest life. This, of course, can have a meaning full of lofty truth, just as the Stoic principle, "Follow nature," is a fair-sounding phrase, which can contain the truth, but too often reeks with deadly poison and bestial defilement. If to live the largest life meant so to live as to develop the greatest and noblest powers of human nature in the exercise of the highest prerogatives of man, beginning with the humble bowing down before the God who made him, and going on to the service which leads to uprightness and finally to the glorification of nature in the plenitude of reward,—it would be a counsel of heavenly worth. But practical, concrete experience shows what is meant by those who prate about living their own life. It means letting loose the beast of untamed desires to the

ruin of others and the destruction of all that is sacred in life.

For the evolutionists it is pleasure that gives life its value; and since this is so, the second counsel is: Enjoy yourself. Why not, indeed, if man is only a brute of a higher and more complex organization? if this life is the be-all and end-all of existence? An easy morality! And if the sum of pains and troubles is greater than the sum of pleasure to be wrung out of a predetermined world, then in the name of uprightness and morality kill yourself. Suicide they do not like to call it; for that has an ugly sound, and ugly sounds do not make for pleasure. But to make away with oneself, to free oneself, to have done with everything, to leave it all,—this sounds well enough, and this is the deliberate urging of the prophets of this irreligion.

Yet, after all, there are other pleasures besides those of sense: there are the higher delights of esthetic and intellectual enjoyment; and by the third commandment the siren voice calls to the quest of these satisfactions. With this one need not quarrel,

so long as indulgence in such pleasures does not contravene the duty to higher things; so long, for instance, as a lover of music does not let his wife and children starve, whilst he enjoys the luxury of sweet sounds; so long as a litterateur does not suffer his child to go down to death or worse, whilst he dallies with the delights of poesy.

The adherents of moral evolution, however, have their advice for this contingency in the fifth and last precept of their pentalogue. But before we come to that, we must note that, since to live the fullest life and to enjoy the entirety of pleasure, even of imagination and mind, the bodily organism must be undisturbed by pain, their fourth commandment is: Take care of your health and guard the laws of hygiene. Now, once again, no blame is to be attached to the effort to bestow reasonable care upon the body. None but the thoughtless and the ignorant would deny the desirable results of cleanliness, even with respect to personal uprightness. But there is an exaggerated cult of this body of ours and of its comforts. The men in the filth of the trenches are not less

men, because for the protection of things of higher worth they have been forced to burrow in the earth and to live a life of dirty discomfort, which cannot be appreciated by those who have looked at their misery only from afar. And the sane care of the body does not imply, as the system of moral evolution preaches, that the priest of the religion of the future will be the physician and that the director of human consciences will be the man who heals the human frame.

Finally,—and now we hearken to their clarion call to bestir oneself for the welfare of others!—since the pains and misfortunes of others bring discomfort to a man and sour the sweetness of his draught of pleasure, one is advised to devote himself to others, to relieve their misery, and to procure for them the good things of life. Self-defense and self-satisfaction urge to thoughtfulness for one's fellows; egotism leads to the outpourings of altruism. This is their call to self-sacrifice! Many indeed there are who go no farther than this in their regard for others,—if they go so far. And why should they go so far? Why not wrap oneself

round with indifference or shield oneself by flight from the disgusting sight of the sores of Lazarus, from the disagreeable sound of the cries of the hungry poor or the wails of misery of the down-trodden and the outcast? There is no reason in this system why one should not thus harden his heart. Nay, even if in a vague philanthropy one does give some assistance to others for the warmth of self-satisfaction which brings some sentimental pleasure or for the gratifying applause of one's fellowmen, how different all this is from the true ideal of self-sacrifice, which has crowned the heads of the great ones of mankind with the aureola of noble worth!

So, these are the commandments of moral evolution. The number of the commandments is cut in two; but morality itself is crushed into absolute nothingness. And if the advocates of the system are asked for some solid reasons to establish so radical a position as theirs, they reply by loud reiterations, not of proofs, but of assumptions, unproved and in most cases unprovable.

What are these gratuitous assumptions?

First, they assume that there is but one force in the universe and that this world is not the work of a personal Creator. Against this assumption we have proved that the self-existent personal God is the author of the world and reigns as the Lord of the universe. And if the saying, "God's in His heaven; all's right with the world," does not entirely express the whole truth, since there are many things that are not right just now, we know that God *is* in His heaven and all will be righted in the world, that justice will reign and that evil will be conquered, that the all-wise and all-good God has a care for the work of His hands, and that His providence rules all the things that are made.

In the second place, Spencer and his kind assume the spontaneous generation of life from non-life as a necessary postulate of their theory. Prove it? They have never proved it. All the known facts in the wide world prove the contrary and show that life comes from life alone. Nay, in the light of their first assumption which makes God an absurdity, even though the one blind force in the world, the changing helpless one,

could be called the Deity, this spontaneous generation would be a manifest impossibility. Whether, in view of omnipotent creative power, this natural origin of life from non-life could ever be proved, is a philosophical consideration which does not concern us now. But, from the standpoint of materialistic evolution, such a generation is a direct violation of the principle of contradiction and of the law of causality. The greater does not come forth from the less, except when the less has such power given to it by what is greater than both.

Yet, if for no other reason than to escape from this contradiction of their position, they assume that there is a difference only of degree and not of kind between life and non-life, between the brute in its insignificance and man in the glory of his kingship of creation. Has this ever been proved? Never. Can it ever be proved? Again, never. On the contrary, we have seen how man essentially surpasses the brute by the spirituality of his soul, whose activities grasp the immaterial realities that transcend the things of sense, and how he goes

forward in a conscious, reasoned progress distinctive of his prowess.

Another assumption necessary for the theory is that the races of men, that are called primitive, are altogether immoral and irreligious, or at least unmoral and unreligious. But this too, as we have seen, contradicts the fundamental religious fact, acknowledged by the unprejudiced and proved more and more by the fair-minded researches of anthropology.

Of course, absolute determinism is another of the foundation-stones of their temple of immorality. For them man is not free, but is like a straw in a whirlwind or a leaf in the rushing waters of Niagara. Is this proved? Far from it: the contrary is established by the ethical and psychological proofs of man's liberty already considered.

And the last of the assumptions of the system is this, that progress must be perpetual. Ever and onward the tide of progress must roll; ever and onward must it bear the helpless beings on its bosom; ever and backward must the shores of weakness and ignorance and folly recede before the

resistless onrush of advance. But again, from the standpoint of materialistic evolution, as from the basic position of agnosticism or of any form of pantheism, this is a gratuitous assumption, and is opposed to many facts. We indeed admit the great progress in the universe. We point with glowing pride to man's onward march as proof of the splendid spirituality of his soul. We can look to the future with tranquil assurance, in spite of the fact that the past holds the record of retrogression as well as the story of advance. But then, we admit the beneficent power of a personal and provident Almighty Creator: we know that He will bring things right as the days go by, and that He will accomplish the degree of perfection which He freely decreed when He freely chose this world from the millions that might have been. Yes, for us continued, though limited, progress is a well grounded hope. But for one who denies the theistic explanation of the world such a hope is presumption, and it must wither into despair, when such a one takes stock of the intellectual grounds of his position.

Truly the goddess of moral evolution is an idol, foul and degrading, and her voice is deadly to all who hearken to her. Morality? Why, the solid fact of morality,—and it *is* a fact, vouched for by mankind's universal acceptance of the notions of duty and responsibility, by the remorse for evil deeds and by the consciousness of well-doing,—this fact is contradicted by the theory which explains morality by making it an impossibility. Its watchword, "Enjoy yourself," leads to debauchery and to the destruction of the foundations of social life; it kills the devotedness without which family and State must perish. Even if the chimerical dreams of the advocates of moral evolution could be realized after untold millions of years (and they will never be), on what is the moral life of the men and women of today and tomorrow to be grounded? On shifting sand, in the system of the evolutionists: and when the rain falls and the floods come and the winds blow, the house will fall and great will be the fall thereof.[1]

The system leaves no basis for morality

[1] Cf. Matt. VII, 27.

and religion. Why should man worship God, when there is no God? Why should man's free will be bound to offer the homage of the whole man to his Maker, when man has no free will and there is no Creator? Why should man be referred to at all in the entire investigation, when there is no man, but only a "good gorilla"? Why, indeed?

If one can face unmoved the consequences of such a theory, not of morality, but of immorality, there is no hope for him. Besides the disastrous fact that in this system there is no sanction for morality, as there is no morality, one of the first consequences is the glorification of suicide as lawful and laudable when the trials of life have outweighed its pleasures. Haeckel plainly stands for this;[1] and he is not alone. And again, no wonder; for if man is absolute master of himself and not responsible to the Lord of all for the life which is a sacred trust, why not throw it away, if he is tired of it? And going on from one's own life to the life of others, the system counsels its votaries to

[1] *The Wonders of Life*, p. 112.

make away with the weak and helpless, with incurables and the hopelessly suffering. Haeckel advocates that:[1] so does Spencer:[2] so too, though for different reasons, do Renan and Nietzsche: so do some doctors and associations of professional men in our own land. And the nightmare grows more gruesome; the claims, more blasphemous, until success is glorified as morality, until might makes right, until man is lifted up to the "bad eminence" of the "superman" in the struggle for existence.

It is with a feeling of relief, like drawing a breath of clean air after being drugged with the foul exhalations of pestilential poison, that we can turn to the truth. In view of what we have seen, it is all so simple, yet so sublime; all so obvious, yet so comprehensive; all so clear, yet so invigorating to the spirit of man. We are seeking an answer to the question, why man must freely express his dependence upon God by the profession of religion. We have under-

[1] *Ib.*, pp. 116, 118–120.

[2] *The Study of Sociology*, c. XIV, p. 314 ff. Cf. also *The Man Versus the State*, treating of the sins of legislators, esp. p. 362 ff.

stood that it is quite proper so to do: now we are asking why a man is bound to do it. The answer comes to this: the natural moral law binds man to fulfill the essential order which arises from the condition of his being; God is the author of that law, and by His will decrees that man's physical condition should be the norm of his moral life. Free man is and dependent,—that is the way God fashioned him; and therefore God's will binds him to act out in his life of free effort this dependence upon the God who made him.

From the unbeginning depths of eternity God's all-wise, all-seeing mind conceived the plan according to which He would govern the world which He would freely create. His will so to rule is the eternal law, by which all things are guided to their goal. Freely He called creatures into being, and began to direct them to that for which He made them. The purpose for which all things were made was, as we have seen, the external glory of God, who could have no other object than Himself, since He alone is worthy of Himself. So, man too was made

for God's glory, for the knowledge and praise and reverence and love and service of God; and without his or some intelligent creature's existence the magnificent material universe would be without an adequate explanation. Man was made for endless happiness (a point to which I shall come back in the next lecture), and in the designs of God this happiness and God's glory are to be identified.

Now, to this glory of God, to this magnificent end of the recognition and praise and love of His manifested excellence, God directs all things. To say that He does not is to utter blasphemy. For, it is to assert either that He does not know how to guide creatures to their destiny,—and then He is not all-wise; or that He does not care for the order that flows from the very nature of the things He has made,—and then He is not uprightness and holiness itself; or that He cannot constrain creatures to what He has decreed,—and then He is not omnipotent. In any case, He would not be God. Yes, to deny this providence of God is to deny the very existence of the Most High.

But, let it be noted well, God must and does guide creatures to their end in accordance with the nature which He has given them. Irrational beings He urges on by the compelling tendencies, the impulses and instincts of their nature, so that they necessarily follow out the order willed by Him. We see the stars and planets in the depths of space, each and all forever acting out the plan designed by the all-wise Architect of the universe, all revolving in the orbits traced by Him, all exercising the activities given by Him according to the law fixed by His almighty will. The plants and the animals too go on in the way determined by God, all working out the harmony of unity in bewildering multiplicity, which is the order of His wisdom.

But man, as rational and free, cannot be thus directed to his end by the rigid necessity of a physical law. His self-determining nature, given by God, must be left to decide itself; yet man *must* work out the designs of his Lord. This working out of God's designs is not a something without any compulsion: there is necessity, but it is

a moral necessity: man is urged on by the force of a law that is moral, not physical. In a nature, not distorted by sensual dissipation or twisted from its centre by spiritual pride, there easily springs up a realization of the truth of the existence and the wisdom and the holiness and the omnipotence of God, who wills the right order of things; and as a consequence man sees this necessity to do good and avoid evil imposed upon him by the will of his Maker.

This is more than the recognition that some things are good and others are bad. Things are good or bad, according as they agree with the nature which they perfect or are out of joint with that nature, considered in its entirety and as including all its relations to things that are above it or below it or on the same plane as itself. The standard of what perfects a nature, the norm of what is good with respect to a certain thing, is that nature or thing itself. This is so clear, that, when we would exhort a man to do what is good for him, we are accustomed to say: "Be a man. Don't be a brute: be a man."

But there is more than this. Nature is not the source of the obligation to do what is good and to avoid what is bad. That obligation must come from above. If I say to a man: "Do not blaspheme; do not steal; do not degrade yourself with the vileness of lust or the bestiality of intemperance," and he asks me, "Why not?" I may say, "Because all these things are against the dignity of your true nobility of nature." And I have spoken true; but I have not answered his question. For, I have not told him why he must not do what is against the dignity of his nature. I cannot urge upon him, that it is because he must obey reason; for to obey reason is to obey himself, and to obey himself is a manifest impossibility. I have told him how he should act, if he wishes to be a real man; but I have not told him why he is bound to be true to his manhood. If he should retort, as he might, "But what if I wish to be less than a man? What if I am willing to debase myself beneath the level of the brute? Why not?" the reason I have given holds no answer to his query. The only answer is this: "Because to do so is to

contravene the will of God Himself: it is to offend your Maker: it is to *sin:* it is to lay yourself open to the penalty of retribution for your transgression. You may not, because the law, the natural moral law, is against it; and, though you can violate this law, you should not, nay, you must not; God forbids it." And this is the last answer to the question: the case is closed.

This too is the answer to the question about the necessity of professing religion: man must serve and worship God because God demands it by the undying moral law. Do not talk about an irreligious man being good. Do not say that a man who does his duty to his fellowmen, but spurns the fulfillment of his obligation to the Author of his being; a man who will not bow down before the God who made him; a man who for pleasure or avarice or pride refuses to live as right reason shows him that God commands him to live,—do not, I say, tell me that such a man is a good man. He is not; for he is guilty of a crime which violates the most fundamental duty of his free, but dependent being. The most sacred obligation

of the natural law, which is firm with the immovability of God's sovereignty and of man's natural position as a creature of God, is that man should praise and reverence and love and serve God.

What is more, if it is once clear, that by the voice of revelation God has spoken to man to proclaim a truth or to prescribe a duty by the positive will of the Creator, then by the force of that same law of nature the creature is bound to bow down in reverent assent to that revelation, to follow out in humble and loyal service the commands of Him who is above all, yet who rules man out of the depths of an unbounded love.

And so, the chain of evidence is almost complete,—that golden chain which binds heaven to earth and earth to heaven. Only one link remains to be forged; and to do that shall be our task in the following lecture. The moral law holds the free will of man to the fulfillment of his duty of worshiping God. By this bond freedom and necessity are reconciled.

And the exercise of freedom under the constraint of this law makes for the greater

exaltation of man. Liberty grows more perfect by its use unto righteousness, just as it is degraded by yielding to evil. A man who rushes along the pathways of passion and sin, who denies no craving of his unworthy impulses, who is swept along by the full tide of dissipation, may indeed be proud enough to boast of his unfettered freedom; but it is all a lie,—and he knows it. He is, and he knows that he is, a wretched self-made slave. But the man who bows down to the law of God, which binds him to the sacred order that flows from the very nature of things and is ratified by the will of the almighty Maker of all, is master of himself and is truly free. This we know from the right use of our God-given reason: this is what the dear Christ told the world during the days of His mortal life, when He said: "The truth," and all this is the truth, "the truth shall make you free. . . . Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin," [1] the slave of evil. Yes, he who violates the law of God, which is meant to link the feebleness of man's will to what is high and noble; he

[1] John VIII, 32, 34.

who, knowing God, does not worship Him, is the most pitiable and abject of slaves: he who knows and loves and serves God is free with the freedom of the children of God.

LECTURE VI

THE SANCTION UNTO EVERLASTING

Summary of foregoing. Sanction necessary for effective law. Universality of notion of sanction. Some sanction in this life. Not sufficient. Hence complete in future life. Man's soul immortal. Spurious proofs of spiritualists. Desire of perfect happiness. No "conditioned immortality." Heaven and hell sanction as to good and evil. Both eternal. No difficulty as to first. Reason defends teaching of revelation as to eternal retribution. Sufficient sanction: probation fixed with life. Objections: God's justice: His goodness. "De profundis" "Sursum corda."

Not only to the one who has labored, but even to the passive spectator, there is a certain satisfaction that comes with the completion of a work. The riveting of the last bolt in a massive bridge, the driving of the last spike in the track of a great railway are occasions for celebration, because they mark the conclusion of efforts well and earnestly expended. In the days which are now hardly more than memories, the village

smithy was a place of special interest for young and old. To see the forge glow and the sparks fly; to hear the ring of the hammer on the anvil; to watch the flowing muscles of the workers as they bent to their task; to note the work grow nearer and nearer to the end; to stand by as the last link of a huge chain (a ship's anchor-chain perhaps) was being fashioned, and to mark the last strong stroke that finished all,—that was a deep and honest satisfaction worth having.

That deep and honest satisfaction is rightly ours. For, we have not only looked on whilst a big work was being done; we have labored, whilst we prayed, over the momentous task that engaged us. We have been forging the links of the great chain of religious evidence; we have been fashioning the parts of the knowledge touching the rights of God and the duties of man. And as we give ourselves to the conclusion of our task, we can feel the glow of gratification of the workman who has labored hard and well. But one more link remains to be forged; and then the work of proving the

necessity of man's professing religion is ended. After that there is left for all the fulfillment of the obligation.

God exists. He is the cause of all outside His own mysterious life, the author of everything that is not Himself. He made the heavens and the earth and all that is therein; in the might of His unbounded dominion He rules as the Lord of the universe. Lord of man too is He, the Master of the master of the material world. To man, the uncrowned sovereign of nature, God gave wondrous powers; for He made him but "a little less than the angels." He endowed him with a soul that is simple and spiritual and free; a soul that is not made of parts, that is intrinsically independent of matter in its operations and its existence, that is possessed of the marvelous principle of free self-determination. But, for all his majestic dignity, man is the creature of his Maker; nay, his dependence upon that Lord of his is the very root-principle of his greatness. Dependent he is and free; and therefore the right order of things demands that he should live as a freely dependent creature, that is, that he

should freely express in his life the dependence of his being upon God.

But besides the appropriateness of such a life, there is its obligation: man is bound and necessitated to this profession of his subjection to God. Not physically coerced is he, as are the non-rational creatures of the world by the physical laws of nature's God, but morally bound by the moral law, which the all-wise and all-holy Lord has placed to hold the free wilfulness of man to the order which is not only heaven's first law, but earth's first law as well. Between man's good acts and the attainment of man's last end God Himself has fixed a necessary connection, as none but God Himself could do. Man must do good and avoid evil: especially must he act out in his life the good of religion and avoid the evil of irreligion, because the almighty will of the great God so commands, because the moral law so requires, because the bond between heaven and earth so constrains him.

However,—and this brings us to our present and final consideration,—in order that a law be not nugatory, in order that it be ef-

fective, it is necessary that there should be a sanction to urge the obligation of that law. Otherwise, the one who is subject to the law might ignore and violate it with impunity, and obligation would be reduced to a mere empty word, to a sound signifying nothing. Now, God's moral law over man has its sanction, and it is "The Sanction Unto Everlasting."

To say that a law has a sanction means that there are certain rewards established for its observance and fixed penalties determined for its violation. Ordinarily more stress is laid upon punishment for demerit than on reward for merit, since as a rule men are more powerfully appealed to by the fear of incurring physical ills than by the dread of losing physical good. They find it easier to renounce particular pleasures than to endure definite pains. And so, in legislation touching man the sanction of law usually takes on the character of punishment for transgression.

As I have said, the very notion of a real law carries with it the idea of sanction. The law of God is a real law; and so, whether we

look at the matter from the side of God or from the side of man, this divine law must have its sanction.

If, on the one hand, the life of man has an undoubted moral value; if his actions have a necessary connection with his last end (and we have shown that they have, for we have proved the existence of the moral law), then only such actions as are good can possibly bring man to his last end. Actions which are bad must of necessity exclude him from the possession of his last end: they carry within themselves the sanction against their malice. By the infliction of this sanction the violated order is repaired; human liberty bears the burden of its own choice. And this is nothing more than justice. It would be the perversion of order, if evil in any form could be the principle of the possession of good.

From the side of God, on the other hand, without this serious will, which urges the observance of law by sufficient sanction, the very notion of God truly willing man's dependence, as He must because of His infinite rectitude, vanishes into thin air,—the very

principle of moral obligation disappears, the supreme sovereignty of God becomes a farce, God dwindles into an insignificant weakling, and man is impiously raised to the throne of divinity.

Not many of those who balk at the thought of punishment for transgression would find fault with reward for well-doing, unless indeed even this ran counter to their ideas about the condition of man's life here and hereafter. But as for punishment, they are forever its declared enemies. Yet they have against themselves the united voice of all mankind. At the base of all the religious systems of the world, which flourished before the enlightening (?) advent of rationalism, is found the recognition of divine punishment for violations of divine law. This, as the pagan Seneca remarked,[1] is something worthy of serious thought. Egypt, Babylon, ancient India, Greece, Rome,—all these held to the doctrine of the reward or punishment of the soul, and that too in the life beyond the grave.

In connection with the sanction of God's

[1] *Ad Lucilium*, CXVII.

law this thought of the future life is of paramount importance. In seriously willing the observance of the moral law, as He must seriously will it because of His measureless sanctity, God's infinite wisdom demands a sufficient and perfect sanction. He must attach to His law such rewards and penalties as will so move the will, as not to crush its physical freedom. Now, all this means a sanction that is sufficient. Anything else would imply that God willed the end and did not will the means necessary to that end; and that would be the denial of His wisdom.

As a matter of cold, concrete fact, there is not in this life any sufficient sanction for the moral law. Some sanction there is, it is true. In a limited sense virtue is its own reward. It brings peace of soul, such as can never be known by one who follows the primrose path of gentle dalliance or rushes along rebellious to the requirements of his native dignity and falls into the abyss of defilement. Sobriety and moderation make for even corporal well-being. An upright life ordinarily wins the esteem of one's fellows and the

honor which is due to a good man: it leads to domestic joy and social tranquillity. All of these are very desirable good things. On the other hand, as against a life of scornful evil or of wild transgression, there is the biting, stinging verdict of the remorse of conscience, which sternly condemns the culprit, unless its voice has been silenced by the riotous excesses of dissipation or by the blind pride that would justify sin. Often too, nature itself strikes in revenge for the violation of the law, crowds mad-houses with gibbering fools, and fills the graves of earth with the wrecks of men and women who have dared to disregard its mandates, which are the commands of God.

All this is true; but it is also true that this is not a sufficient sanction for the law of God. Rewards and punishments that are adequate are not always meted out to men here in this life. Only too frequently the unjust oppressor prospers, and the scourge of justice does not fall upon him with stinging lash. Often the thief escapes detection or is shielded in his injustice behind the wall of

legality, as distinct from morality. Often the good are stricken with suffering and bear the burden of crushing sorrow.

Nay more, the requirements of moral uprightness may demand that a man should lay down his life for the sake of duty. Not for any fear of death must a fireman or a policeman be kept back from fulfilling his obligation of protecting his fellow-citizens. A soldier must front the foe and fight for his country even in the face of disaster. A priest must not turn aside from the valley of the shadows, when there is question of bringing the consolations of religion to one in need of his ministrations. A martyr, before the demands of a persecuting tyrant, must forfeit all rather than be untrue to God's all-holy rights, and must pour forth his life's blood rather than offer incense to a false deity. Not only are these men heroes, if they stand for what is noble; not only are they cowards, if they do not: if they fail, they are sinners and have violated the law of the Supreme Lawgiver. Now, it is as clear as the sun in heaven, that in this life there can be no sanction at all which could nerve a

man to the fulfillment of his obligation to cast away life itself in the discharge of duty. It therefore follows with inevitable necessity that there must be a sanction in the life to come, where all that is left imperfect in this mortal span will be made forever right.

When a man dies, he does not die utterly; he does not sink into the earth and rot and live no more. No; beyond the grave he will live on; for the tomb cannot hold what is noblest and best in him. With its wondrous God-given powers his soul will live unto the endless ages of eternity. Through the unmeasured æons that were without beginning God existed before the soul was called into being; but now that God has created it, as long as God shall be God and throughout the never-ending duration of a limitless eternity the soul shall survive. I am speaking of the immortality of the soul of man: I am not referring to the resurrection of the body for reunion with that soul; nor do I intend to enter upon the philosophical discussion, as to whether, apart from the positive revelation of God, it can be proved that the body will rise again. In view of our present pur-

pose such an inquiry is quite unimportant. But the immortality of the soul is a thing to which reason itself can unquestionably mount with certainty.

This certainty is not based upon the more than doubtful proofs brought forward by spiritualism (or better, spiritism) in behalf of a life beyond the grave. Much has been made of what spiritualists call "the word from the other side." But it has not been proved that these revelations come from the spirits of the dead; and the preponderance of evidence points to the fact, that whilst the communications come from spirits indeed, they come from spirits whose relationship with the "prince of darkness" is more than a matter of suspicion.

The so-called messages would not have excited so much attention, had it not been for the writings of men eminent in other branches of knowledge. Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir Conan Doyle have done not a little of late to give an impulse to the spiritualistic movement; but their words have found favor because of the prominence of the men, and not for any intrinsic worth in what they said.

Sir Oliver Lodge is great in the field of physical science; Sir Conan Doyle is expert when he weaves the scientific theories of Sherlock Holmes: but both are objects of compassion, when they venture into the realm of philosophy and theology. It is indeed pitiable that men of intelligence should be willing to give their faith to what is built upon the sand, and should refuse credence not only to the revelation of God, but to the soundest verdict of reason itself. Yet the messages of spiritualism are opposed both to revelation and to reason.

Though this is a small fault in the eyes of an unbeliever, they do contradict revelation; for they belie the word of God with reference to man, his fall, and redemption, and of course they laugh at eternal retribution. It is not a valid argumentation for us to turn against the spiritualists the truths of revelation, before we have established revelation. But we have a right to answer them in the strongest negative, when they declare that the spiritualistic cult holds nothing which is against the tenets of Christianity. Nothing against Christianity in spiritualism! Why,

it gives the lie to the very mission of Christ Jesus.

In the name of pure reason we reject any aid which would come from the spiritualists' spurious grounds for assent to a life beyond the grave; for they deny the very thing that is at the bottom of the great fact of future existence, when they reject, as they do, the spirituality of the soul. In speaking of man's spiritual permanence after death Conan Doyle says: "Are we to be mere wisps of gaseous happiness floating about in the empyrean? That seems to be the idea." That is not the idea; and anyone but a confirmed materialist, blind to the just and true statement of the claims of those who hold to the spirituality of man's soul, would out of common honesty refrain from such gross misrepresentation. "But," he continues, "if there is no body like our own" (in the disembodied existence of the next life), "and if there is no character like our own, then say what they will, we have become extinct."[1] He cannot conceive of a spiritual

[1] *Metropolitan*, Jan., 1918.

soul. Yet we have seen that this spirituality is the supreme quality of man's soul.

In its highest activities the soul can and does act without intrinsic dependence upon matter: so too it can and does exist without intrinsic dependence upon its material consort: and this is precisely the root-principle of its immortality. When the union between soul and body has broken down because of the body's incapability to continue its part in the union, the body is dissolved into its elements; but the soul lives on, because it is independent of matter and of material requirements. The soul is naturally immortal. Not only can it live forever: of itself it cannot die. There is no principle of dissolution within it, since it is altogether immaterial and does not intrinsically depend on matter for its activity or for its existence.

And as it cannot fail from within, so too is it free from the possibility of failing from without. Only by annihilation could it thus cease to be; and annihilation, like creation, can come only from the will of the infinite

God. Yet,—and I say this, not from irreverence towards the great God, but out of the depths of adoring homage for His excellence,—God Himself cannot annihilate the soul of man. Had He made the soul other than He has made it, He could of course send it back into the depths of nothingness, just as He drew it forth from there; but now He cannot unmake it, because He has pledged His divine word not to do so. And how? By the natural desire, the irrepressible longing for perfect happiness, which He has placed so deep in the soul that it is part of its nature and can never be eradicated.

To say that man desires perfect happiness is to utter a truism. He desires it by a necessity of his nature beyond and beneath the depths of freedom: he is seeking it in every deliberate volition which proceeds from the self-determination of his will. This innate longing is, in fact, the tap-root of his liberty; it is the fountain-source of every free activity. Yet this desire itself is not free: man must desire to be perfectly happy. When we declare that he longs for this perfect happiness with a yearning, which as part of his

nature is the work of his Maker and is the pledge of his Creator to the possibility of attaining the object of this desire, we are only asserting that man must desire that his desires be fulfilled; we are only proposing under another form the self-evident truth that the will is made for good. Now, perfect happiness, besides the element of the exclusion of all evil and the possession of all good, clamors for the unending duration of this blessed state. And so, man's undying longing proves that he is made for some object that can satisfy the imperious demands of this yearning: it also proves that he is made for the everlasting possession of perfect bliss.

Hence, from a twofold point of view, it is clear, that, having made the soul as He did, God cannot annihilate it: first, because He owes it to His infinite wisdom that, having made a being which is capable of immortality, He should treat it as He has made it,—and without contradicting Himself He cannot reduce it to nothingness; and secondly, because He owes it to His infinite fidelity to His promises to make good the pledge

spoken in the depths of the soul in response to the longing for perfect happiness and for life everlasting.

The soul's unending existence is no "conditional immortality," such as is advocated by White and Drummond and made popular by the application to spiritual things of the evolutionistic fetish of the survival of the fittest. Such a conditional immortality would be an extraneous gift, superadded to a soul naturally doomed to extinction, and given as a reward for its godly living,—a convenient doctrine for the denial of eternal retribution; whereas by the very nature given to it by God the soul is exempt from the debt to death and is pledged by God's own word to life without end.

It is by the possession of God in this immortal life of the human soul that man is meant to attain the perfect happiness which is the goal towards which he is directed by God. But this goal is to be attained freely by a free creature through the observance of the moral law that binds him. If a man freely follows the way traced by God, he will come to the joyous term: if he obstinately

turns aside and will have nothing to do with God, he will be excluded from the destiny of bliss. The state of happiness we call heaven; that of exclusion from joy we name hell. Heaven and hell are God's sanction upon the observance of the law whereby He binds His free creatures to their last end; and both are unto everlasting.

Few are found who would deny the necessity of eternity for the perfect joy, which is the sanction of good,—none, in fact, save those whose philosophy is the philosophy of the beast and who deny man's life in the beyond. And, from the very notion of the perfect happiness to which man aspires, it is evident that the reward must be without end and without the fear of any such cessation.

But everlasting retribution as a sanction against sin! That is met by some with a smile of disdain and with a shriek of angry imprecation by others. I have already referred to the spiritualists' tenets about an eternal hell. Listen to the measured (!) words of Conan Doyle: "Hell drops out altogether, as it has long dropped out of the thoughts of every reasonable man. This

conception is odious and blasphemous in its view of the Creator. . . . Hell as a permanent place does not exist . . . there is no pain beyond,"[1] and so forth and so on. This attitude of mind is very common nowadays. And mark it well, this position does not merely maintain that reason does not conclusively prove an eternal hell. It goes farther and boldly asserts, that, no matter what anyone says, no matter what revelation declares, there simply is no hell. That places these men in the position of attackers of what they call "an old fashioned notion," and lays the burden of proof on them. In reply to them it is quite enough to show that their reasons do not prove what they start out to prove, and they are crushed beneath the weight of proof which falls upon them.

We do not assert that reason alone can prove with utter finality all that the revelation of God has told us about the place of fearful retribution. Reason tells us nothing about the nature of the punishment of the hereafter beyond the fact, that it will be the exclusion from bliss and that it will be

[1] *Metropolitan*, Jan., 1918.

retribution. But reason does show us how rational is faith in God's revelation, which lights up the terrible blackness of the dungeon of His wrath; reason does defend this revelation against the groundless attacks of the impugners of the word of God; reason does give powerful arguments to show that the sanction of punishment is eternal.

In connection with this last point it is well to remark that the notion of complete and sufficient sanction fails, if it is not eternal; for nothing short of this can hold men in the face of the seduction and violence of temptations. As St. Basil said, the mere idea of a limit in the chastisement authorizes all sorts of audacity against the Lord of all. And St. Jerome was right when he declared: "Imagine as many years as you please and double the lapse of the longest time; nay, in the count of years add uncounted ages, heaped with torment: if the end of all is the same, what is past is considered as nothing; for we do not ask what we may have been at any time, but what we shall be forever." [1]

Again, reason tells us most certainly that,

[1] *In Jonam*, c. III.

whatever may be said of the eternity of the punishment, the retribution must at least be final. For, "by the order of nature and good consequence, the man who has abandoned God, goes without God; and he who has shunned his last end and final good, arrives not at it; and he who would not go when invited to the feast, eats not of the same; and whoso has withdrawn from God, from him God withdraws."[1] Yes, reason shows this; but it shows more. For if, on the one hand, the soul is immortal, and if, on the other, the period of trial is fixed with this life, then the retribution must be eternal. Now, we have seen that the soul cannot die and that God has pledged Himself that it shall not be annihilated, but shall live forever. But is the term of trial fixed with this life? From God's revelation we know that it is; but what of the voice of reason alone? Does reason exclude the possibility of another trial after the days of earth have passed? Perhaps not; but everything points that way, since death is the end of *this* life, and unless this is the term and unless

[1] Rickaby, *Moral Philosophy*, p. 163.

the trial cannot go over into another stage of existence, it is hard to see where the perfect sanction of this life is to be found.

In any case, however, there must surely be some limit to trials; for man's end is an end, and precludes the very notion of unending probations. And if, when the series of probations is past, the soul is still opposed to God, hardened in its dogged clinging to evil, then the unending future of pain must be faced. Otherwise one denies the wisdom and justice and sanctity of God, who cannot take to the embrace of His love the ingrate and the rebel and the traitor. If every soul simply will and must come to God in spite of all the depths of possible malice within it, the attainment of man's end would not be free; only the quicker or slower attainment would lie within the field of the soul's activity.

Another consideration that points to this life as the term of probation is given by St. Thomas. He repeatedly points out,[1] that owing to its spiritual character, by which after it is separated from the body it ap-

[1] Cf. Vonier, *The Human Soul*, c. XXX.

proximates the manner of action of a pure spirit, the soul in its disembodied state is incapable of change. As a spirit cannot alter its judgment, so too its will, once fixed by itself whether for good or evil, must remain forever determined in its volition. Still, I do not press this point; for it is a theory which is deduced after the knowledge of the fact has come from divine revelation.

Nor is it necessary to press the point. Even if it be admitted that the disembodied soul is not quite *like* a pure spirit, since it *is* not a pure spirit; even if it be granted that God could give the soul other chances in the world to come, if He so willed, the truth is still unchanged. The giving of other chances in a future existence would depend upon God's free choice; and the free choice of God can be known only from God's revelation of Himself. If, then, reason could not definitely deny that there is a chance after death, neither could it affirm that there is. Nothing but God's revelation could settle the matter beyond the reach of all doubt. Now, that revelation has told us that God has fixed this life as the term of trial and

that the sanction of retribution is eternal. And reason can defend this revelation from the attacks of rationalists and sentimentalists of whatever kind.

As I have said, the burden of proof lies on those who in the name of reason deny an eternal hell. If they were satisfied with the assertion, that reason alone does not prove beyond the possibility of any doubt the absolutely unending character of the sanction of pain, one need not find serious fault with their contention, though reason does point the other way. But when they say without qualification that there is no hell, that nothing proves it, that it is a disgrace to reason and a blasphemy against God to speak of it,—then they must advance reasons that will support the charge. And they cannot.

There is nothing against the justice of God in this eternal punishment of sin: on the contrary it is part of God's justice to demand this penalty. It is sheer folly to reject this punishment because the offence which merits it is committed in a short space of time, perhaps in the twinkling of an eye. The duration of the sinful act makes no dif-

ference even in the sanction of human legislation. It may take but an instant to perpetrate murder most foul; yet the just penalty is the irreparable pain of death or the seemingly endless years of heart-tearing confinement. It may require but a few moments to play the detestable part of a traitor to one's country in the time of war; but the righteous punishment for the culprit is to face the firing-squad or to endure the ignominious fate of hanging. And so too with regard to sin against God, it may be short-lived; yet its punishment is measured, not by the duration of the act, but by its malice.

Moreover, though the act of sin is passing, the state of sin endures. The soul remains turned away from God, blasted with the horror of enmity against its Maker, so long as it does not retract its evil deed and avail itself of the conditions of pardon, which the offended God may have prescribed. Now, the reprobate soul, having reached the term of probation and having fixed its unalterable condition, is forever petrified in evil, is forever hating the holiness and majesty of the infinite Godhead, is forever hurling its cry

of impotent defiance in the face of the Almighty. And its pride must be forever put down.

This is the first and essential purpose of punishment,—to restore violated order, to make that order, imposed on all creatures by the sovereignty of God, prevail against the upstart who dares to disturb it. Sentimentalists may prate about correction of the offender being the object of punishment actually inflicted. In the case of any law this is but a secondary end, as is also the deterring of others from the way of evil in so far as may be. But the primary and essential end of penalty is the restoration of order, the vindication of the law's sovereignty. So too is it here. Man has risen up against the divine order: this divine order rises up against him and crushes him. Man has refused to acknowledge the sovereignty of God: that sovereignty must be vindicated, unless the puny creature is to triumph over God's dominion. Man would not glorify God with the free service which would lead to the perfect happiness of the possession of God: he is forced in unwilling punishment

to glorify the sanctity and justice which he scorned.

If some cannot see the justice of the penalty, it is largely because they think lightly of sin and slight the supreme majesty of the infinite God. Sin is not a mere peccadillo: it is a hideous crime. It is disobedience and rebellion against the Most High. It is turning against Him the very gifts of His unbounded love. It is placing one's supreme happiness in a creature, and as such is equivalent idolatry. It is practically to strive to withdraw oneself from the dominion of God, and that could be done only by destroying Him. So, the sinner would reach up to the eternal God and would drag the Almighty from His everlasting throne. No wonder God hates sin; no wonder He smites it with the thunderbolts of His wrath, when it stands before Him unrelenting and unrepentant.

But what of God's goodness? How can that be reconciled with this terrible punishment, the thought of which has overwhelmed even the saints of God? Let us be candid, and admit that the human mind cannot en-

tirely solve this mystery of God's justice and His goodness, any more than it can completely explain the problem of His unchanging eternity and His freedom, any more than it can fully grasp the real inwardness of the uncaused being of the Godhead. But this is no ground for the slightest doubt about the fact which He has placed before us in His revelation, the fact to which reason itself points.

To seek an answer as to how God in His goodness can punish so severely is to misconstrue the whole question. It is not God's goodness as such which inflicts the penalty of hell upon the reprobate, as, for that matter, it is not His goodness as such which inflicts any punishment however slight. No; it is not God's goodness as such that punishes: it is His justice.

His merciful goodness with its long-suffering love has shown itself all through the sinner's life; it has given and forgiven; it has followed and called and yearned and urged (and, as revelation tells us, has died for man), that the work of sin might be undone. But the obdurate sinner would have

none of God and His love; he clung to evil, and now it is his; he preferred the creature to the Creator, and when the bolt of death fell, he had himself closed the gates to divine mercy and goodness, and nothing but inexorable justice remained for the self-damned wretch.

As God's goodness is not the reason why He punishes, neither is this goodness any reason why His justice should not punish. God is infinitely good; but He is infinitely just. His justice is good and His goodness is just. Yes, God is all-goodness and all-love; and for this very reason, by a necessity of His being He loves His own infinite excellence, His sanctity, His sovereignty, His justice; and these He must defend against the heinous injuries and the final proud impunity of perverse human wills. Were it otherwise, the creature would have the last word in the revolt against the Creator, and irreparable disorder would be the law.

The infliction of penalty at the hands of God is not the outcome of barbarous and savage gloating over pain. It is the effect of

the supreme goodness, which would love nothing at all, if it did not first and foremost cleave to His own illimitable and unspeakable loveliness and infinite excellence. God would not be good, if He did not love Himself infinitely; and He would not love Himself, if He did not love His justice, and if He did not hate with an undying and unbounded hatred the monstrous evil of sin, which is radically opposed to His very Being.

There, then, the last link is forged, and our task is done. In the light of reason, upright and sincere and humble, we have seen how God stands in this world of His. God is: He is the uncaused, self-existent, supreme Being, the source of all and the end thereof: He is the Master, and man is His servant in absolute dependence. In this dependence man is still the monarch of things here below, glorified with the majesty of a soul that is spiritual and free and immortal. And here is the reason of religion: God is God, and man in his freedom is the creature. Hence, order demands that man express this dependence in his life by freely glorifying and

worshiping his Maker. To this worship, which right reason reveals as the appropriate thing, man is constrained by the moral law, which is the will of God binding the will of man, and which has a sanction unto everlasting.

Therefore, man is bound to profess religion. Nay more, if God should make any revelation, man must accept it; if God should declare that He demands any particular form of worship, man is bound to render it. To refuse is to deny God's wisdom or truthfulness or sovereignty, and that is to deny His very existence. The foundation of religion in general, then, is the firm support of the temple of Christianity; and that temple of Christianity is the tabernacle of God with men, the one holy Catholic Church.

But a few moments ago we stood in awe and fear before the terrible sanction of the law as it faces evil; and that sanction will surely fall on the man who persistently turns his back upon God in the pride of irreligion. From the depths let us lift up our souls. "De profundis" "Sursum corda!" Let us close our considerations with the vision of

the glory of the reward, which is the part of the sanction, where by the side of justice and sanctity God's goodness has its full and unbounded sway.

The heaven of nature would be a something more thrilling than we can quite realize. Never to know a pang of sorrow, never a pain or a doubt or a misgiving; never to experience the stab of separation from loved ones; never to fear the possibility of falling away from God through the weakness of a faltering will: and besides all this, to have the fulness of joys to satisfy every longing in the throbbing ecstasy of blessedness; always unto everlasting to hold God by the powers of mind and will,—truly even this is more than we can appreciate.

But when the further promise is spoken by the voice of God and we are told of the intuitive vision of God, face to face and heart to heart with Him forever, pulsing with the knowledge and the love and the life of God Himself,—we cannot understand. No, "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love

Him."[1] That assuredly is a supernatural sanction worthy of the infinite Lover of mankind.

If its very thought is so overwhelming, what will the reality be, when the veil is drawn aside and we are face to face with Him! The sacredness of it all is like the glorious sun of an eternal Easter day, lighting up the hills of life and the valleys where perchance we have walked through the shadows of a veritable Passion. Truly "the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us";[2] "for that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory."[3] God grant that it come to all of us!

[1] I Cor. II, 9.
[2] Rom. VIII, 18.
[3] II Cor. IV, 17.

1749